

# **ACROSS THE BLOCKADE**

**H.N. BRAILSFORD**

BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY  
JUNIOR COLLEGE  
WILKES-BARRE, PENN'A.



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A RECORD OF TRAVELS  
IN ENEMY EUROPE

BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY  
JUNIOR COLLEGE  
WILKES-BARRE, PENN'A.

BY

HENRY NOEL BRAILSFORD

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# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
NOTE . . . . .	vii
I. IN COMMUNIST HUNGARY . . . . .	1
II. IN HUNGER-STRICKEN AUSTRIA . . . . .	37
III. HUNGER AND REVOLUTION IN VIENNA . . . . .	51
IV. A DEAD CITY IN POLAND . . . . .	59
V. ON THE MARGIN OF RUSSIA . . . . .	69
VI. THE POLISH JEWS . . . . .	82
VII. POLAND AS BARRIER . . . . .	97
VIII. AN IMPRESSION OF GERMANY . . . . .	114
IX. THE SOVIET IDEA IN GERMANY . . . . .	134
X. THE NEW MILITARISM . . . . .	149
XI. A COMMENT ON THE PEACE . . . . .	161



## NOTE

THIS book records impressions formed during four months spent in blockaded Europe between February and May, 1919. I owe my acknowledgements to the editors of the *Daily Herald*, the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, and the *Manchester Guardian*, in whose columns part of some of the following chapters originally appeared.

The footnotes are of a later date than the articles themselves. The undated chapters were written after my return to England.

H. N. BRAILSFORD.

*June* 1919.





# ACROSS THE BLOCKADE

## I

### IN COMMUNIST HUNGARY

AMONG memories of four months' travel in Central Europe, a night journey from Vienna to Budapest stands vividly out. It was cold, and the heating apparatus of the train did not work. For lack of fuel we traveled in a crawling train. For lack of fuel we were put on a half-ration of light. The covering of the seats had been cut away, as usual, by desperate men in search of material for clothes. The darkness, the cold, the discomfort, the dirt—it was all typical of the condition to which war and the blockade have reduced all Europe east of the Rhine.

Two fellow-passengers sat in the dim light and talked incessantly. They were average members of the once comfortable middle-class, one a small capitalist and the other a doctor, neighbors in a German-Austrian town near the Hungarian frontier. What they said was not exceptionally interesting, but it filled in for me the picture of daily life of which this desolate train was the frame. They talked at first of clothes and food. Neither

had bought a new suit for over three years. The doctor had poor relations, and he had gradually given his wardrobe away: he now possessed only the old suit that he wore. One of the couple from reasons of economy had stopped drinking beer: the other had given up tobacco. As for meat and bacon, they had long ago cut down their three meat meals a day to one: of late the doctor had tried to do without that one.

“What troubles me most,” said the capitalist, who had evidently closed down his factory, “is that every day one or another of my old workmen comes to me for help. I can’t refuse. But if it goes on much longer, I shall be condemning my own children to starvation.”

“Yes,” answered the doctor, “there’s not much charity left in the world to-day. *Homo homini lupus*. I performed a difficult operation on a farmer’s wife last week. Yesterday I called again. She kissed my hand and said I had saved her life. As I went out, I saw that the farmer was killing a pig. I asked him to sell me a ham. ‘I have nothing to spare for strangers,’ was the man’s answer—and I had just saved his wife’s life. . . . We are all getting selfish. I sometimes think men have given too much. . . . The strain has been too great. For four years men have been pouring out life, blood, health, all they had, for their country. If you had sat at their deathbeds, as I had to do in the field-hospital, and taken down their last messages to wife and children as they

lay in agony, you would know what this war has cost.”

So the desultory talk went on. I will not try to recall the doctor's moving tales of the field-hospital, nor his anger against the general staff and the war-makers in Vienna, though that, too, was part of the desolation. The moral capital of these men was gone—the loyalties, the conventions, the megalomania, the clap-trap. They had gone bankrupt in illusions, and the lies that had sustained them had lost their power.

The doctor was an altruist, but before long the capitalist had brought back the talk to his own sad case. “Think of it, man,” he was saying. “Do you realize what the fall of the krone means? All we have falls with it. We used to be able to buy 105 francs with 100 kronen, and now we can barely get 17. It's ruin. It means that none of us is worth a fifth of what we had,” and then he went on to propound a muddle-headed theory that mortgages at least were safe. The doctor had a clear head, and he tore that imagination to pieces. “Look here,” he said, “you advanced 10,000 kronen on a cottage before the war. You paid out kronen that were kronen. To-day, your man pays you back, but he pays you in kronen that are worth only a fifth of their old value. You lose four in five. No, no, mortgages are no safer than anything else.” “Then I'm ruined,” said the small capitalist, and he sank into gloomy silence till the train drew up at his station.

Half an hour later the train crossed the frontier into Hungary. Flags were flying. There was a strange electric air of animation in the station. On the Austrian side of the line men bent their heads and said that they were ruined. On the Hungarian side they had taken the plunge. Debts and mortgages, loans and share-capital, all the old lumber had gone, and men walked with quicker steps because they were facing a new life. After that conversation in the train I began to understand why the opposition to the Social Revolution in Budapest had been so slight. Are one's privileges as a "bourgeois" worth defending, when one has had to drop all the small luxuries of life? Does one battle for respectability, when one's wardrobe is reduced to the last three-year-old suit? Does one fight for property when its measure in currency has sunk to 20 per cent.? There are two factors in every revolution, the impetus of the force that makes for change, and conviction of the forces that resist it. When every bourgeois knows already that he is ruined, who is going to rush the Bolshevik barricades?

The Austrian-German is by nature inert, sympathetic, artistic, witty, and under happy conditions gay, but he lacks energy and constructive power. Budapest is largely a Jewish town, but its Jewish population, neither persecuted nor isolated as in Poland, has dropped orthodoxy and the old Yiddish speech. It has adopted Magyar names, talks Magyar at home, and used to culti-



vate a robust Magyar patriotism. It is lively, restless, nervous, energetic, alert to every new thing. It found in Communism the violent stimulus which it needed in the hour of despair and defeat. With a nearly unanimous impetus the "intellectuals" (many of them Jews) had flung themselves with the Magyar workmen of the towns into Communism. The thing to us seems inconceivable. One must remember that there is no old middle class in Hungary. There are the recently-rich, the stock-brokers, the war profiteers, the professional men. This society is accustomed to sudden gains and sudden losses. No one save the landed nobility has any long tradition. This race has the gambler's instinct, and any one who has heard Hungarian music knows with what fire the blood of this people moves. Three weeks ago private ownership in capital disappeared in a night. People adapted themselves with amazing versatility to the change. I found the Ministries thronged with eager applicants for jobs. Counts had new visiting cards printed without their titles. Bankers and factory-managers wore red badges in their coats. Ladies of noble family found work as translators or teachers or musicians, and laughed gaily at the discovery that they had a value in the labor market. I spent an afternoon in a salon frequented by landowners who had lost their titles and their estates. The men were far from cheerful, but the women were obviously stimulated by the new adventure of looking for work.

They had all succeeded, and some had met with kindness on the way. One professed herself already an ardent Communist. Emancipation had come to them unexpectedly and unsought, and they quitted their old empty lives with little regret. I met gloomy people who complained. I heard of suicides, but in the main the mood was one of excitement at the strangeness and novelty of the Revolution. The Government had the wisdom to cultivate a mood of gaiety and rejoicing, and it summoned the arts to its aid. A recruiting procession for the Red Guard was a veritable pageant. The leading actors recited new revolutionary poems at the street corners, as the procession halted, and the favorites of the Opera sang in the service of the new idea. One had the irresistible feeling in these bright days of spring, as the music of these festivals floated on the lilac-scented air over the swift Danube, that youth and art, and talent and the creative impulse, were with this spirited movement. There was no mistaking the enthusiasm of the city crowd during these processions and reviews. Every one expected that Vienna would follow Munich and "go Bolshevik" soon (which it will not do), and the general belief was that when the Entente attempts to impose its crushing peace terms, all Europe would seek escape in Communism, from the Urals to the Rhine. Budapest felt itself in the fashion. Older men said philosophically (I am quoting a Professor of History, well known in England), "It was inevit-

able. It is the fault of the Entente. One must recognize that the era of capitalism is finally over in Central Europe. We can adjust ourselves to Communism. The happy thing is that the change, thanks to Bela Kun, has come in such an orderly way."

It is common form in the oratory and journalism of the West to identify Bolshevism and anarchy. The traveler who enters Communist Hungary with that illusion is destined to a crescendo of disappointment. There is in Europe to-day no city more monotonously orderly than Budapest, and the stranger who expected confusion emerges in the end a little stifled by the oppressive order. The Communism which prevails in Hungary reflects the later phases of the Russian Revolution. Its first principle is authority, and with all the enthusiasm of a new faith it is creating also a more than Roman discipline. The daily papers have been turned into gazettes which devote interminable columns to the edicts and legislation of the new Government. Page after page is filled with "orders" which regulate every phase of life from the distribution of boots to the repertoire of the theater. Their tone is sharp and peremptory, and most of them contain a threat which has become a commonplace of Communist style—that the least resistance will be punished by death. The official smiles as he pens the conventional words, for in point of fact after three weeks of proletarian dictatorship only one death sen-

tence has been passed by the revolutionary tribunal, and even that has not been executed. The only people who have been shot were two or three Red Guards who attempted to pillage. The strange thing is that these orders are obeyed. Tips are forbidden, and waiters actually return them with a gesture of outraged virtue. Alcohol is prohibited, and no one dares to drink. There is no terror, for there is no resistance. A leading Communist explained to me with a good deal of humor why they had succeeded in imposing obedience without bloody severity. "The bourgeois Press," he said, "did our terrorism for us. For months before the Revolution, it had been publishing its interminable inventions about the Red Terror in Russia. The result was that every one believed that Communists are cannibals or worse. The result is that we are spared the trouble of being severe. We have only to speak to be obeyed." The essential difference between Russia and Hungary lies in the fact that the Hungarian proletariat was from the first united. There are no Mensheviki and no Social Revolutionaries in Hungary, and consequently there has been no attempt to sabotage by the intellectuals. The Social Democrats and the Communists fused their separate organizations at the moment of the Revolution to form a united Socialist party. The orthodox Socialists supplied the numbers, the Communists the driving force. The new movement stepped into a political vacuum. Defeat and



the collapse of Magyar Imperialism had ruined all the parties of the old régime. Even the Left had abdicated. The Radicals had already dissolved their party organization before the *coup d'état* and had rallied to the support of the Socialists. The other parties had been shattered by the catastrophic end of the war and the assassination of Count Tisza. Morally and materially the old order was bankrupt.

To see the Communist Revolution in its historical perspective, we must understand the experience through which Hungary had passed between October and March. The autumn Revolution had broken with the feudal past. Universal suffrage, after a generation of struggle, had come at last, and the long oppression of the subject races was ended for all time. Even in the hour of disaster, however, the Magyars had found it hard to believe that the Entente would really dismember their country. The integrity of the lands that belonged to St. Stephen's Crown was a sacrosanct superstition. For the utmost concessions in the shape of Home Rule for Slovaks, Roumanians, and Serbs the Magyars were prepared, but not for the final alienation of the territories inhabited by these races, which happen to include some of the richest cornlands, together with the few coal-mines of Hungary. The ruling caste was prepared to acquiesce in the choice of Count Michael Karolyi as President of the Republic, largely because it imagined that his reputation

would conciliate the Entente. It certainly ought to have done so. Though himself an aristocrat, linked by birth and marriage to the ruling oligarchy, he had always battled manfully and honestly for an honest, democratic franchise. Throughout the war, with astonishing courage, he had made openly pacifist speeches in the Diet, and had opposed the Prussian-Magyar alliance. The Entente, however, was in no way placated by the choice of Karolyi. I met him in Budapest and heard his story from his own lips. Evidently a man of independence and force of character, he is also a good talker and has a perfect command of English. Early in his brief period of power he had met the French General Franchet d'Esperey, who commanded in the East, only to encounter that insolence which we used to consider a peculiarly Prussian characteristic. Throughout the winter the blockade was maintained in full rigor, though the whole Hungarian army had been disbanded. The material sufferings of this armistice period were infinitely worse than those of the war, for now the little central area of purely Magyar Hungary was isolated, and cut off from all its normal sources of supply. Fuel was almost unobtainable, and, as Karolyi put it, the task of finding just enough coal to provide Budapest with a minimum of light and power was "a daily anguish." The cold months went by, in ever-growing want and despair. The Roumanians, had occupied Transylvania, and as its Mag-

yar and German inhabitants (not much, if at all, less than half the population of the occupied area) fled from the harsh rule of the invaders, Budapest was overcrowded with hundreds of thousands of refugees, who had all to be housed and fed. The more moderate Socialists had joined the Radicals in forming a Coalition Cabinet but the Left Wing and the Communists were working outside it for a social revolution. Two considerations, as he told me, influenced Karolyi to make his startling gesture of despair in the last week of March, when he resigned his office as President of the Republic and handed over power to a Dictatorship of the Proletariat. One of them was a certainty that the Revolution must presently come, with his assent or without it: he preferred that it should come bloodlessly. The other was the perception that the Entente was determined to impose a Peace of Strangulation, under which it would be impossible for Hungary to live. Two events precipitated his decision. One of them was the arrival of a Note, couched in dictatorial language (it opened with the words *J'ordonne*), in which the British naval commander of the Danube ordered the Hungarians to hand over their whole river mercantile fleet of tugs and barges to the Tchechs. The Tchechs had forced their way down through alien country to the Danube, had annexed the purely German river side port of Pressburg on the borders of Austria and Hungary, and now proposed to set up in business as river-

carriers by appropriating the vessels on which Budapest depended for all its heavy transport. Hard on this Note came another from the French Colonel Vix, which ordered the Hungarians to give up large reaches of territory, Magyar by population and vital to their economic existence, which had been left to them under the Armistice. What was to be done? To submit to these two Notes meant ruin. To resist in isolation was equally ruin. One Power, however, still existed in Europe which had not bent to the victors. If Hungary could come to no understanding with the Entente, her obvious course was to turn to Russia, but Russia would be her ally only if she would herself enter the Moscow International and make an end of capitalism within her borders. Thus the fear of a bloody rising from below, the intolerable pressure of our blockade, and the dread of a harsh peace conceived by the French "policy of alliances" in the interests of the Roumanians and the Tchechs, all conspired to make the Hungarian Revolution. It had, however, a more potent psychological cause. In the depths of despair the human instinct for self-preservation cried out for a new hope. Patriotism was a spring broken by the intolerable strain of the war. Religion was an official convention linked with the old feudalism and the capitalist era. In the prudent schemes of opportunist politicians, who mixed a little reformist Socialism with middle-class Liberalism and the peasant view of land-



ownership, there was no stimulus for mind or will. From the ruined past and the intolerable present, Hungary turned to Communism because its will could recover health only in gigantic effort of creation. There was nothing left that seemed worth conserving. Traditions, reverences, catch-words—they were all meaningless. Even of property there was little left to defend, for every man's wealth had shrunk by the fall of the exchange to a fifth of its old value. One party had an energetic belief. There survived no force which could oppose it.

From the first the Revolution had on its side the organized manual workers of the towns, especially the powerful trade union of metal workers, whose leader, Garbai, became the President of the Communist State. The poorer brain-workers, especially clerks of all grades, were scarcely less well-disposed, for they had become relatively more impoverished, during the war and the blockade, than the hand-workers, who alone had contrived to bring their wages into some distant relation to the mounting prices. At a big and enthusiastic Communist meeting for the German-speaking inhabitants of Budapest (they form about a quarter of the population) what chiefly impressed me was the intense respectability of the audience. Judging by appearances they seemed to be chiefly clerks, engineers, or skilled artisans, and the well-reasoned speeches made a special point of the edicts of the Soviet Government, which for the

first time in history assured full liberty and encouragement to the German schools, and promised them a theater of their own in the capital. It was by no means solely or even chiefly to the "ragged proletariat" that the new régime appealed. It was, indeed, welcomed, or at least tolerated, by the intensely chauvinistic Magyar patriots, largely because its resistance to the exactions of the Entente flattered their nationalism. There is little doubt that it profited in some degree from this half-conscious emotion of patriotism, but I must, in fairness, add that Bela Kun lost no opportunity of disavowing any sentiment so old-fashioned. Again and again he declared officially that his Government attached no importance whatever to the historical integrity of Hungarian territory. If they should find themselves in conflict with Roumanians or Tchechs, it would not be over racial or territorial issues, but because these capitalistic or feudal States were naturally at enmity with a proletarian Republic. Though I must not quote him as saying so, what I think was in Bela Kun's mind was that if Slovakia and Roumania were also to become friendly and perhaps federated Soviet Republics, the military and above all the economic difficulties of Soviet Hungary would automatically disappear. There would no longer be a menace on their frontiers, and the blockade would be replaced by an active exchange of goods. How far it was part of his policy to promote revolution actively among his

neighbors I cannot say, but he was naturally too cautious to avow it. When I put the question to him point-blank, he answered that "Hungary had enough to do to save herself, without concerning herself with others." That answer would not have satisfied the semi-Socialist Government in Vienna, which was seriously alarmed by the activity of Hungarian Communist propaganda.

The spirit of order and authority which marked the Communist régime in Hungary reflected the remarkable personality of Bela Kun. Unflinching in theory and bold in action, he had no liking for needless violence, and he detested disorder. At the first glance one was impressed by the vitality and self-possession of the man. He worked incessantly, and yet he kept a freshness of mind which never failed him when he gave his shrewd and logical yet always courteous answers to critics. He is still a young man in his thirties, and was before the war a Socialist journalist as yet unknown to fame. As a junior officer of the reserve, he was taken prisoner (like the Austrian Foreign Secretary, Dr. Bauer) by the Russians, worked energetically as a Bolshevik in Petrograd, and came into close touch with Lenin. He was a faithful pupil of his master, and knew his mind intimately enough to avoid his earlier mistakes. It was, indeed, his ambition to apply at once the experience gained during the first eighteen months of Communist rule in Russia. His courage was already legendary, and, like Lenin, he is an opti-

mist who never despairs. He was in Moscow during the rising of the Left Socialist Revolutionaries against the Bolsheviks. An armored motor-car, bristling with machine guns, came rushing down the street in which the Soviet headquarters stood. Kun was unarmed, but he sallied out alone, walked straight to meet the car, jumped on the foot-board, and by sheer insistence, audacity, and magnetism overawed its crew. One by one they slunk away, and Bela Kun triumphantly drove the captured car to his own quarters. He was in prison in Budapest when Karolyi made way for the Revolution, and with his body still sore from a beating administered by his jailers he went straight from his dungeon to the Royal Palace on the hill. He improvised an understanding on behalf of the Communists with the much more numerous Social Democrats, and formed a mixed Socialist-Communist Government in which half the offices fell to his own group. His political difficulties were chiefly with the Communist Left Wing, which probably would have made a bloody terror but for his instinct of order and moderation. His Ministry, by the average of years, must have been one of the youngest that ever held power in Europe, but it had a presentable academic record. No less than six of the thirty Commissioners were University Professors or lecturers.

The daring of the new administration was shown in its instant attack upon the problems of



daily life. It had to cope with abnormal difficulties. Budapest was thronged with refugees and demobilized soldiers; some say that it had double its normal population. The Government instantly laid down the principle that every adult is entitled to one living room, and no family to more than three rooms, apart from the kitchen and rooms set aside for work. The homeless were promptly housed, and in many a palace the inmates retired to the three rooms allowed to them by law. The British Labor Party announced as its motto at the last election, "No cake for any till all have bread." The billeting plans of the Hungarian Government were a drastic application of that principle. In practice it was carried out with reasonable consideration. Friends and relatives were encouraged to live together. On the amusing plea that the bourgeois would corrupt honest workers, families of the same habits of life were grouped together. A certain professor of the University, with a family of three, had five large rooms—two too many. One was allowed him as a study, and the official who dealt with his case suggested to him that he should bring his secretary to inhabit the fifth room. That illustration exhibits the policy of the administration. It was friendly to men and women of the middle class who contributed anything to society by their work. If it was inclined to be harsh, it was only to the idle and unproductive rich. Clothing was no less scarce than house-room, and no new stocks could

be imported. In each block of flats the tenants were required to elect trustees who must countersign their applications for new clothes or furniture and grant them only in case of actual need. These are only a few instances of the drastic measures which the People's Commissaries adopted to deal with an abnormal condition of scarcity. They make on the whole for the good of the greatest number. In nothing perhaps did the Commissioners act so firmly as in the instant and total prohibition of all alcoholic drink. There is no evasion of that command. Hungary is obediently "dry," and to this even more than to the firmly disciplined Red Guards it owes order. This prohibition of drink involved a drastic meddling with social habits. In some other respects, however, the Government showed a prudent moderation. Though it forbade priests and pastors to preach on political questions, it was prompt in stopping any attacks of its own too anti-clerical supporters upon the religious liberty of the Church. It also postponed (after publishing a draft edict) legislation for the reform of marriage and divorce. Readers who may have heard the far from amusing joke that Bolsheviki "nationalize women" will be interested to learn that they closed the brothels of Budapest. Prostitution, as Bela Kun put it, is a typical institution of capitalism. Their most unpopular measure was probably the requisitioning of all jewels and plate, over a certain minimum value. That was done pri-

marily to provide an article of export, or a basis for credit, so soon as the blockade should be lifted and trade resumed. "Liquid" private property, in the shape of bank balances, was not confiscated when the banks were nationalized, but a limit of 2,000 kronen (£25 at the exchange then ruling) per month was placed on the amount which might be drawn from any one account. That was a tactical measure, designed to hinder the free use of wealth for counter-revolutionary designs.

The test question for any form of Socialism in Hungary lies beyond the boundaries of the towns. They were ripe for the change. The rural population, however, was still conservative and clerical. The younger peasants may have been shaken somewhat out of the conservatism of their class by the war, but their elders, half of them illiterate, cling tenaciously to the idea of private ownership. The former Government proposed to break up the vast latifundia into small farms, and on Count Karolyi's own estate the partition had actually begun. Socialism could have no future outside the towns if that policy were carried out, and the peasants would necessarily form a preponderant conservative propertied class. Everywhere in Eastern Europe the day of the big feudal landlord is over, but whether he shall be succeeded by the small peasant owner is not yet settled. In Prussia, the half-Socialist Government has shirked the question, and has given the owners of big estates two years in which to break them

up voluntarily without legislative interference. In Poland the Socialists do not venture to oppose the individualist peasant program. In Russia, though a law of nationalization has been enacted, it has been found impossible to cope with the peasant instinct of ownership, and in practice nationalization differs little from a system of small holdings. In Hungary the Socialists were more alive to the danger of multiplying owners, and they had contrived during the winter to delay the execution of the Karolyi program of compulsory subdivision. They held that the big estates in Hungary, often leased to limited companies, would lend themselves readily to a system of communal ownership and co-operative working. Even before the Revolution the Socialists in some counties started an active campaign of education among the landless workers of the great estates. The argument was simple and convincing. One might divide the land but one could not break up the immense model cattle-sheds with their perfect equipment. I saw some of these estates in Somogy County. There was electric light and hygienic drainage in the byres; the workers' cottages had neither. Then if gains must be shared under communism, so also must risks, and the Hungarian peasant has reason to dread the sudden local storms of hail. He readily understood the case for communizing engines and steam plows, and even before the Revolution, on one great estate near Kaposvar the laborers, under the influence



of the local Socialist party, themselves formed a co-operative society to work the estate, instead of subdividing it.

In any event the peasants realized that the end of March was no time for a destructive experiment, for the fields called for the sower. In the first days of the Revolution a plan of organization was rapidly worked out by the Commissioner for Agriculture, Dr. Hamburger, a country doctor with a high record for revolutionary courage, who stepped out of prison like so many of his colleagues, to wield a dictator's power.<sup>1</sup> On each great estate over 200 acres (the limit is only provisional, and may vary in each district) the entire working staff from steward to milkmaid is formed into a permanent guild or society. The only condition of membership is the obligation to work at least 120 days in the year—a low minimum which is intended to lure the neighboring owners

<sup>1</sup> During the winter of 1917-18, Dr. Hamburger was in command of a Red Cross contingent, in a small town behind the line of the Italian front, which happened to be a vital railway junction. During the Brest negotiations, when Trotsky called on the workers of the Central Powers to strike, Dr. Hamburger was the first to respond. He had great influence with the men of his own contingent, and also with the railway workers. Not only did they give the signal for the strike (which the Socialists of Vienna promptly obeyed), they even proclaimed a local Soviet Government in their area, and for some time held up the military communications, by way of compelling the Austro-Hungarian Government to make a peace on the basis of "no annexations, no indemnities." When the movement was suppressed, Dr. Hamburger, in spite of a promise to the contrary, was arrested and imprisoned until the Revolution released him.

of small "uneconomic" holdings (as half-time workers) into these agricultural guilds. The maintenance of the workers is a first charge upon the produce of the communal farm. Each family will receive a ration of grain, meat, dairy produce, and vegetables according to the number of its members. The surplus product is then bought by the district central agricultural association, which is in its turn subordinate to a county association, and to the Ministry.

In these new organizations there are centralized the purchase of seeds, manures, machines, and the sale of produce to the town populations of Hungary. This centralization will make for economy and efficiency in all the industries subsidiary to agriculture, from the making of butter to the manufacture of beet sugar. It will be an obligation on the societies to expend half of each year's surplus on improvements—a term which covers the building of decent dwellings for the working members of the society as well as the purchase of machinery. The remaining half of the surplus is distributed in time wages to the working members of the community, and is the inducement which will stimulate them to work their best for as many days in the year as possible. I had a full opportunity, during a memorable visit to the little county town and district of Kaposvar, of seeing all these novel institutions in the company of Dr. Hamburger, during the first weeks of the experiment. It is a rich and smiling country, of rolling

hills, deep pasture, and pleasant woodland. The meadows on these April days were gay with cowslips and ladies' smocks. We drove from farm to farm in a "socialized" carriage which had belonged to the absentee millionaire noble, who owned half the county. I could see that all the mechanism of these great estates was running smoothly, from the dairies, the breeding studs, and light railway to the clean, well-tilled fields, with the wheat already in vigorous growth. I witnessed the immense popularity of Dr. Hamburger in the little town, and found among the officials of local agricultural organization several who talked English, French, or German, and explained to me all their far-reaching plans for the improvement of buildings, roads, light railways and manufacturing processes. One of them, by the way, was a *ci-devant* Count, whose Socialism had led him long ago to give up his own lands, and to work with his own hands as a laborer. The little town seethed with ambition, hope, and enthusiasm, and every one believed that they would soon realize all the predictions of Kropotkin, by enhancing the productivity of the soil. My ignorance of Magyar was, however, a fatal handicap in preventing me from talking directly to the peasants. Enthusiasts are rarely good judges of other people's state of mind, and I discounted what the Socialists themselves told me. I was, however, lucky in finding an intelligent man who spoke German, who retained his strong individualist opinion, and had

been the leader of the local peasant-owners' opposition to Socialism. I asked him what the laborers were thinking. He summed up their view as follows: "They care nothing for the theory or ideals of Socialism, but they are attracted by the promises of the leaders. At present they are disposed to work heartily and will give the experiment a chance. If these promises are kept, if they see new and healthy cottages built, if they get what they never had before, free medical attendance and well-organized schools, if they see that the former gains of the absentee capitalist-landlord are flowing into their own pockets, they will remain firm supporters of the system." From a hostile but capable witness this was favorable testimony.

The constitution of these rural workers' guilds reflects the wisdom hardly gained from the early experience of Bolshevik Russia. The autonomy of the workers allows them a certain initiative and control, but the final authority is the central bureaucracy. Each estate (they average 10,000 to 20,000 acres) elects its own workers' soviet, and this in turn chooses a managing committee of three. Side by side with this elected authority there is, however, a manager appointed by the district organization. He is usually the bailiff of the old aristocratic landlord. These men were experts, and against all the traditions of their class they have rallied to Socialism. Feudalism received its death-blow in the war. The alterna-



tive was the partition of the estates among the laborers. That would have meant the end of the stewards' profession, and to-day one may see these men, with their half-aristocratic, half-parasitic manners, wearing a red button in their coats, and serving their new masters with all their habitual correctitude. The steward has the right to veto the decisions of the elected authority, and all its plans and budgets go with his independent reports to the omnipotent central authority.

Agriculture in these vast estates is already a typical modern industry, which dominated a rural proletariat by the power of its concentrated capital. This field is ripe for socialization. Outside it lies the antique world of the peasant—a term which covers the small farmer who hires labor, the peasant who makes a living by the labor of his family from his own ten acres, and finally the struggling small-holder who gains a half-existence from his own inadequate plot, and ekes it out by his work as a hireling for richer men. Towards this intensely conservative peasant world the policy of Communist Hungary will be the minimum of interference. There will be in the villages no socialization of houses or of land. The small owner will struggle on as before. If he is adaptable, he will himself create a voluntary co-operative system. If he is conservative, he will fail to compete with the great industry of the socialized estates. He will have to pay a fixed minimum wage for his hired labor, and if all goes

well, the attraction of life on these comfortable self-governing estates will raise the requirements of his hands. He will hardly survive this generation, but meanwhile the intention is that no village shall be "socialized" until it calls for the change. The lesson of Russia has been learned. One cannot force the pace of a peasant's thinking.<sup>1</sup> His mind, however, will be formed in the next generation in the village schools. They were the stronghold of the Church. They are now the advance-posts of the Socialist State.

Industry has been reorganized on similar lines. Like the absentee landlord, the sleeping partner and the shareholder disappear without compensation. As a rule the capitalist, who himself conducted his own business, remains at the maximum monthly salary recognized by communism (3,000 kronen), as a consulting expert. A People's Commissioner (Minister) receives no more. In mines and factories, in so far as the lack of raw ma-

<sup>1</sup> In spite of this cautious policy I gather that the communist state has had grave difficulties with the peasants. As in Russia, our blockade tells fatally against the experiment. The peasant finds that there is nothing to buy in exchange for his produce. He receives paper for it, but paper will purchase little, partly because nothing can be imported and partly because local industries are lamed for lack of raw materials. As a result, it has become very difficult to provision Budapest, which in April was not really, when compared with Vienna, or even with Berlin, seriously short of food. The city lives on the country, but the city unable to work has nothing to give in exchange. There is no cure for this state of things until the blockade is lifted. The blockade, of course, is maintained with the deliberate intention of destroying a Socialist experiment.

terials due to the blockade allows them to work, the men elect their own soviet, as in the rural guilds. It is a small body with a maximum of seven members. It nominates a manager, but he receives his definite appointment from the Ministry of Production, which alone is competent to dismiss him. As in the country, so in the urban industries, this constitution shows a balance of authority. The workers have a vastly larger sphere of self-government than the most liberal form of capitalism allowed, but the final authority lies with the state. It is the Central Soviet Government, and not the Factory Council, which fixes the scale of wages. There is no risk that the extravagant period of self-indulgence which ruined industry in the early days of Russian communism will be repeated in Hungary. There it is undoubtedly intelligence which rules. I visited a great factory at Budapest, one of the biggest and best of its kind in Europe, which makes electric lamps, telephones, and telegraphic apparatus. The soviet consisted of three scientific and four manual workers, including a woman, and its function was mainly to deal with cases of discipline. The manager was a former engineer of the works, a man, obviously, of ability and good sense. Three former directors were employed, at high salaries, as consultative experts: the other three, who had been mere financiers, ceased to be connected with the works. All the infinitely skilful work of this vast organism went on as before, with this differ-

ence, however, on which workmen and managers both insisted, that men and women alike worked with more spirit, more conscience, more honesty than before. As usual in Budapest, a fair proportion of the workmen of all grades spoke German, and I talked with several of them. They all said the same thing, each in his own way. "We feel that the place belongs to us now." "We are working for ourselves and not for an exploiter." So far from taking less pride in their work, they took more. I saw a telephonic switchboard of a new automatic pattern which one of the men had just invented. The model had been made since the Revolution, and the factory was proud to think that it would better its past record. "What strikes me most," said an English engineer from Birmingham, who had worked in this factory for eleven years, "is that all the little dishonesties of the past have stopped. The men have a keener conscience in their work." In point of fact, the output of the factory, which had fallen off seriously during the misery and unrest of the Karolyi period, was rising again, and rapidly nearing the pre-war standard. None the less, I think the Commissioners (Ministers) must have been anxious lest production should, generally, drop. They were proposing to introduce not only piecework but the Taylor system.

After three weeks one cannot speak of the achievements of Hungarian Communism; one can only describe its plans. Of these the most ambi-



tious center around education. The Minister, or Commissioner, Dr. Lukacs, a former lecturer in philosophy at Heidelberg, combines imagination with courage. He means to achieve this immense end, that culture shall cease to be the privilege of a class. The drudges of the old world, the teachers, have suddenly become the most honored servants of the state, and even the village schoolmaster will receive the maximum salary of 3,000 crowns a month. A uniform salary is to be paid to all teachers, from the university to the village school. The school age will be raised to sixteen and presently to eighteen years, and every boy and girl will have such further education, technical or scientific, as his capacity may merit. Dr. Lukacs hopes to recruit his corps of teachers from the ranks of the academically educated men and women, especially the lawyers, whom the Revolution has placed temporarily among the unemployed. Meanwhile, he is organizing courses which will enable the more capable adult manual workers to fit themselves for scientific work. One year will be spent at the charge of the state in completing their general education, and thereafter they will follow specialized courses in engineering, architecture, or chemistry. The intention is to break down the barrier which has confined the proletarian to the routine work of his craft.

This is not all. Artists whose achievement deserves the distinction, will, by a vote of a college of their peers, be maintained at the public charge

to continue their productive work. To me, I confess, this scheme seems a deplorable and thoughtless check upon the artists' liberty and individuality. This Academy might begin in a revolutionary mood, but it must soon become a clique intolerant of any merit which deviates from its standards. The results for all the arts, for literature and for pioneer thought in science or philosophy, must be equally unfortunate, unless in some way a free career is opened to individual talent. Pictures of high merit in private ownership have been "socialized," and four hundred of them added to the nation's collections. The theaters, and even the cinemas, are also socialized, and Dr. Lukacs has boldly suppressed the more trivial type of performance, and raised the standard of the Budapest repertories, while lowering the price of the seats to workmen. Two plays by Bernard Shaw were being acted while I was in Budapest, and both of them were crowded. The policy of the Government is to please the masses by offering them the fullest satisfaction of their esthetic capacities. The amazing and creditable thing is that in music, and in the theater, it insists on a high standard, which the untrained mass will certainly find exacting. Here too, as in the schools, there is work for the expropriated class. One has heard it said of Soviet Russia, that at one stage of the Revolution educated men and women were reduced to selling matches or newspapers in the streets. If that were true, it would be a condem-

nation of the whole spirit of the system. Hungary, on the other hand, was eager to find work for its "intellectuals."

This picture of Hungary in the first weeks of social revolution would be false if it failed to emphasize the fact that the government is an un-mixed dictatorship. There is no liberty for the Press, or for any political agitation or organization outside the Socialist ranks. The old newspapers all continue to appear, but they all play the correct official tune.<sup>1</sup> No criticism even of details is tolerated, and even in the churches, priests and pastors are forbidden to touch on politics. It is true that an election has been held to constitute the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils. The franchise includes every productive worker, manual or intellectual, with women occupied in the household tasks of their families. A large percentage of those who vote are men and women who used in the old days to rank in the "middle class." Excluded are all who do no productive work, all who live by the toil of others, and (rather strangely) the clergy. Work in the Socialist State is the only source of value, and Communism

<sup>1</sup> There were, I believe, two exceptions, one of them a weekly feminist paper and the other a monthly review, which were allowed considerable latitude. Lenin is fond of saying that the liberty of the press is a bourgeois ideal, conceived in the interests of capital: it means the domination of opinion by wealth. In Russia, non-Bolshevik parties, which have ceased to attempt to overthrow the Soviet régime by force, are now being licensed, one by one, and allowed to set up their own daily press. They are tolerated, in short, when they cease to be a danger.

has its own political adaptation of the Pauline maxim: if a man will not work neither shall he vote. The exclusion tells harshly where it strikes at the small farmer, or the owner of a little workshop (the smaller businesses are not "socialized"), who all work as managers, though they also employ and often exploit others. The franchise is, however, only a temporary grievance: this excluded class will soon be absorbed in the general body of workers. What admits of no defense is the method of election, which was carried out under a state of siege in which no opposition could organize effectively. In each district from sixty to eighty members had to be chosen. The lists were prepared by the Socialist party caucus, and though one might strike out names, this permission was of no practical use. Rival lists were rarely presented, and even then offered only a narrow choice. The voting was on the majority, not the proportional system, and of course, the official list everywhere triumphed. It would have been an honest course to allow the party to nominate the soviets without the pretense of election.

A temporary dictatorship of this type may be defended as a necessary expedient during a sharp, brief crisis. The excuse for it is that the Entente, by the blockade and by its encouragement of counter-revolutionary *émigrés*, was actively working against the Revolution. It will destroy Hungary intellectually and morally if it is continued



for more than a very few months. It is not in fact so much the "dictatorship of the proletariat" as the dictatorship of a single party, which happens to be the one political organization in Hungary that has survived the war. A country which has never known even a distant approach to democracy does not resent it as a western people would do. It should be noted, however, that the control by the soviets, once elected by this rather unsatisfactory process, over the Commissioners, was adequate, and much firmer than that of most Parliaments over Ministers. There is certainly no force outside the Socialist Party which can overthrow it. The landlords and capitalists lack the numbers: the peasants have neither the arms nor the organization. If freedom is to emerge in the near future, it can come, after the foreign enemy has ceased to meddle and blockade, only by a spontaneous movement from within the Socialist movement itself.

I should convey a false impression if I allowed the reader to suppose that the men who are actually working this dictatorship regard it as anything but a momentary phase, a necessary evil endured for the rapid achievement of a great end. Behind the men of action who really made the Revolution, there stood a most interesting group of thinkers and writers who call themselves (after Galileo) the Galileans. Their passion is intellectual freedom. One of them, a man who talked with rare distinction and a touch of genius (he is a

high official of the new régime) explained his position thus: "I am not, in my ultimate view of life, a Socialist, or a Communist. We Galileans have gone beyond the materialism of Marx. But we realize that the destruction of the capitalist system is the first condition for the world's freedom of thought. We shall carry that out, with ruthless logic. We shall tolerate anything in the interval save a sabotage of the intellect." "But," said I, "surely this Dictatorship, which destroys all criticism even of details, which forbids liberty of speech, press, association, is just such sabotage?" "It will be," he answered, "if it goes on too long. It is we intellectuals who suffer most severely from it, for it is our free thinking that it represses, but we are ready to endure it—for a time. It is necessary only so long as we dread overthrow by the Entente. Save us from that, and we will instantly create full liberty." "But tell me," I asked, "are you really at ease? Is there no predatory element in all this Communising? How many of the Red Army are idealists, and how many are robbers?" "Christ," came the answer, "was crucified between two thieves. There is a criminal instinct in all societies, in all men. Capitalism legalized it, confined it, dug channels of profiteering for it. Our task is to destroy it, by evolving a stronger social passion. Shall we succeed? Sometimes I think we are nearing such a time as the Roman Empire passed through in the barbarian invasions. The war has shattered more than the

Central Empires. It has shattered society itself. Only a new faith, a new principle can save it. We Galileans mean to work like one of the old religious orders, with obedience, asceticism, poverty. No lesser effort, no uninspiring compromise could save us. Perhaps we shall fail. Perhaps civilization will go under. We know the risks."

This hasty sketch of an immense effort is based on the firm belief that Communism, as I have seen it in Hungary, is a principle of constructive order, which errs rather on the side of excessive authority than on the side of anarchy. Its makers are men of action, who have taken into partnership with them some thinkers and students whose ability and disinterestedness no one questions. The test of the system will be in its ability to work—at first without adequate public criticism—an immense governing machine efficiently and without corruption. For the moment it promises well. The energy, the faith, the will are there. Without its adventurous experiment, a sick society, robbed of all social and historical ambition, must have vegetated and rotted under the conditions of strangulation imposed by the victors, as unhappy Austria will vegetate and rot. Bela Kun may have his successor as leader.<sup>1</sup> The Socialist Party

<sup>1</sup> As I am passing the proofs, comes the news of Bela Kun's fall. For three months his government had been engaged in incessant war with the Tchecho-Slovaks and the Roumanians who have acted as the army of the allies. Victorious over the former, it fell when the latter were within twenty miles of Budapest. A purely Social Democratic Cabinet, pledged to maintain the accomplished measures of socialization, but also

may evolve in various tendencies. But short of a violent external intervention, an attack organized in Paris by Roumanians or Tchechs, the great estates, the large factories and the banks, are as little likely as the posts and the railways to revert to private ownership. At a heavy cost to personal liberty, and with much inevitable hardship to individuals, the immense transformation has been achieved, without disorder, by a single stroke. If freedom is eclipsed for a moment, the destruction of the capitalist system makes for the first time in a modern state the only condition under which real autonomy is conceivable, whether for the will or for the intellect. Hungary builds upon ruins, but the authors of the destruction were the makers of the war. To chaos and despair a living idea has brought the stimulus of a creative hope.

VIENNA, *April* 21, 1919.

to call a Constituent Assembly, has succeeded the mixed Socialist-Communist régime. It can be only a brief transitional phase, leading to further reaction under further foreign pressure.



## II

### IN HUNGER-STRICKEN AUSTRIA

I HAD wondered, not without anxiety, what it would feel like to be in an enemy country. Should I meet with stiff and resentful pride, or would the attitude be an even more painful cringing? It is neither of these things. Here in Vienna a nation which has made its bloodless Republican revolution believes with a pathetic simplicity in the fraternity of peoples. The chambermaid in my hotel gave me the watchword this morning. She came in smiling with a reminder that this was election day. In two minutes she had told me that she was going to vote Socialist. "Does it feel strange," I asked, "to talk to an enemy?" "No," she answered promptly, "the people has no enemies," and then followed the inevitable sentence which I have heard all day long from almost every one whom I met. "The people is not guilty of this war; the people did not want the war." As a Socialist Deputy put it, "There were perhaps ten thousand people among Austria's fifty millions who welcomed the war, and most of them were profiteers." Wherever I have gone during this momentous day in Austria's history, in the committee rooms of the Socialist candidates, the of-

fices of the Socialist newspaper, and the big "Workers Home" or club-house of the central district, I had only to introduce myself as a foreign comrade to be accorded a welcome, and when I added that I am an Englishman there came a reassuring pressure of the hand.

Is it true, as we have all heard, for many weeks, that Austria is starving? As I crossed the frontier from relatively prosperous Switzerland, I was doubtful. There seemed at first to be plenty of food, rather nasty and very dear, in the station restaurants. Smuggling no doubt was easy. The train crawled slowly through the Tyrolese valleys, incredibly beautiful in their decorations of snow. There was ample time to read the local newspapers. The lack of coal has meant that express trains have ceased to run, and ours went at less than the speed of a London electric train. The first thing that caught my eye were the advertisements in the Socialist organ of Innsbruck. Would any one exchange a few sacks of coal for gold, cigarettes or tobacco? Had any one a little stout leather, or warm woollen stuff for a child's dress that they would give for a pair of golden earrings? In every newspaper that I picked up, the staring salient advertisements were for dealings in jewelry or furs. The middle-class is selling its luxuries for food. I turned to the election news in these local Tyrolese papers. Slander was painfully prominent, but the only mud which seemed to stick was a charge relating to food.

The Clericals accused the Socialists of underhand practices in distributing flour; the Socialists retorted with a shower of disconcerting facts. As I walked down one of the central streets of Vienna to-day, an army aeroplane, flying just above the roofs, dropped a little cloud of leaflets. They exposed the dealings of certain Hapsburg Archdukes who are said to have distinguished themselves as monopolists in food or milk or as army contractors. On the surface of this people's mind there are only two preoccupations; the first is food, and the second is coal. It wants no close observation to mark the lack of coal, even after a few hours' sojourn. In our main-line train, the only Continental "express," crawling along at about ten miles an hour, the conductor came round at nightfall to apologize for turning on the gas only at half-pressure. Walking down the platform at the next stop, I saw that in the third-class carriages, crammed like a London tube with standing passengers, no lights at all were lit. Even in this good hotel the sitting-rooms are chilly, the light barely suffices to read large print, and hot water is obtainable only in limited quantities within stated hours. Bread, of course, is severely rationed, at the rate of a half-kilogram (about 1¼ lb.) weekly. As one got it in the hotel, the portion amounted for the whole day to three slices of the long Viennese loaf, or about one moderately thick slice of an ordinary English loaf. Milk, butter, and cheese were in my experience unobtainable

even in the best hotels and restaurants. Potatoes one could occasionally get in a good hotel, but for the working class they had entirely disappeared. Working-class families could get rationed meat once a week, but no oftener: the rich bought it from smugglers, but at fantastic prices.<sup>1</sup>

Discomfort in the big hotel means starvation in the worker's garret. In the Socialist club of the "Favoriten" quarter I met the local Deputy for the Provincial Diet. He was good enough to take me round his constituency. The streets were filled with a rather dreary crowd, for the famous gaiety of Vienna is a distant memory. The clothes of the working class are manifestly faded and old, and one sees none of the cheap finery that strolls westwards from our East End on Sunday. Patches are so common that they look like a local fashion. The children and the poorer workers clatter along on wooden soles, for leather is the luxury of the rich. The faces of the women and the children are of any tint from yellow and gray to ashy white, and their lips suggest that nearly every one is anemic. I have seen such lips before among refugees in the Balkans. All Central Europe has been Balkanized to-day. We walked past gigantic blocks of modern flats, by no means tasteless as architecture. I asked my guide about the housing conditions. One-roomed dwellings, usually with a little unlit vestibule, are the rule, and the "cabi-

<sup>1</sup> Returning to Vienna in April, I found it in its fourth consecutive meatless week.



nets'' (I should prefer to call them cells) are sometimes no more than 12 feet by 6. My guide, whom every one greeted as we passed, took me into some of these dwellings, choosing them at random. The usual Austrian politeness and good nature made the conversation easy, though I had sometimes to ask for a translation into polite German of the broad Viennese dialect.

In one of the larger rooms was a family of four, a widower and three boys. A tall man, perhaps sixty years of age, stood in the ragged clothes that once were respectable, among the remains of his furniture. The carpet was gone. A bedstead remained. The bedding consisted of straw with something that looked like a horse-blanket eked out by sacks. He was a mason by trade, and in Austria, as elsewhere, building had ceased long ago. How did he live? The City pays six crowns a day to every unemployed man, with an extra crown for each member of the family. The daily income of this household was accordingly ten crowns. The crown used to be worth a fraction over a franc. Its exchange value is now about three pence. I was trying hard to imagine what this could mean in terms of food, when one of the boys came in with the evening meal, the Sunday treat, from the nearest national kitchen. A fragment of meat, probably horse, lay in the pan with a fairly generous supply of gravy, and a dumpling of meal, which is the usual substitute for a potato. The meat was, I should guess, about one-

sixth of a pound, certainly less than a quarter. The cost of this banquet was four crowns and sixty heller (cents), and it had to be shared among one man and three boys. It would leave about half the day's income intact. The old man poured out a long story. His eldest boy, he assured me, was a gifted artist, and moreover he had learned French and Tchech. He would have gone to college, if his father had been able to earn his good pre-war wages. The admiring brothers brought out a big portfolio of his sketches, and the irrelevant water colors, like the wrack of Austria's artistic past, fluttered on to the bare floor and the straw that covered the bed. Now that boy will become a day-laborer—if Austria can buy labor.<sup>1</sup>

In another flat was a family of nine. The man, who had just been demobilized, looked stout and well-fed, but he could find no work. The children had the familiar transparently white skin of anemia. Only one of the nine earns anything, a "young person" as our legislators would call her, who receives 30 kronen a week (say 7s. 6d.) in a factory. How did they live? Chiefly, I gathered, from daily portions of their soup and a slice of bread supplied in the public kitchens to the destitute. One family talked of the dearth of boots, even with wooden soles. Another reminded me

<sup>1</sup> Five months later the Austrian government is writing begging letters to its victors. The blockade is lifted, but it lacks the means to buy raw materials, and without them, no work can begin.

that a sausage which used to cost four heller (cents) before the war is now worth four crowns. None of these, I should say, were habitually degraded families. Their style of speaking, their quiet good manners, and the relics here and there of past possessions stamped them as victims of something less than lifelong penury. "I hope one day to become a human being again," was the terrible phrase which one woman used of herself. In round figures my guide, the Deputy, told me that there are now 100,000 unemployed workers in Vienna. That means about half a million men, women, and children in a population of two millions. Figures tell little, but one figure which came from the house-porter of one of these blocks of flats needs no comment. In his barrack, with its sixty-two one-roomed dwellings, there were thirty-four war-widows.

Literal starvation, in this city, which is even shorter of coal than of food, would have been the general fate had it not been for the public kitchens. I watched the distribution at one of these to-day. The queue had been standing for two hours when I arrived, and still there were from three to four hundred waiting to be served. Most of them were more or less ragged: all were in very old clothes. What struck me most about them was the contrast between the personal cleanliness and tidiness of the women and the poverty of their attire. A woman who had done up her hair with an elaboration which we in England

would think coquettish and excessive would be wearing a shawl or a pair of boots in the last stages of decomposition. The raggedness, I concluded, proceeds not from lack of care or self-respect, but from sheer penury. Some ate their portions at tables; the majority carried them home. The meal consisted of one plate of soup or a soup of mixed vegetables. Both were almost wholly lacking in fat. A strange-looking thing called meat was added. It was, in fact, a sort of rissole, which looked like meat in the sense that it was solid and brown. The proportion of meat in it would not have soiled the conscience of a vegetarian. A single portion of this dish cost 4d., a double portion, twice as much (8d.). I suppose this portion would just keep a man alive, if he were reasonably idle. In point of fact most of these dinners went home, which meant that one portion, single or double, was the day's food for a family of several persons.

That is the diet of those workers who can still pay. There is a free distribution from soup kitchens to those who are wholly destitute. This free soup is doled out in half-liters, without meat or bread, and as the cook sadly confessed to me, there is no fat in it at all. On cabbage day it must be nearly valueless as nourishment; on haricot days it should be sustaining. It is, however, for most of these people their only hot meal in the twenty-four hours. I stood and talked to a group of boys who survived upon it. All of them had that ter-



ribly white transparent skin which means severe anemia. All of them were wearing men's discarded boots tied together with string. I made them show me the soles. All of them were in pulp. One only of the four had reasonably warm clothes (it was ten degrees below zero three nights ago), and that was because he had luckily obtained an old infantry uniform which hung about him like a drooping flag on a pole. Under the rags in which these children are clad peeps out the ashen-white skin tightly stretched over the bones. They live still, chiefly because they possess the tradition of this once gay city, which jokes as it tightens its belt. As I turned away, the boys began to laugh at some private joke of their own. "Well, what is it?" I asked. "Wir sind Wiener Kinder," was the answer of the brightest of them. They cultivate laughter on a very little oatmeal.

The crisis, one may say, is over. Has not Mr. Hoover undertaken to supply grain enough to continue the present exiguous ration of bread? That is true, but on the other hand Vienna is about to enter on a period of meatless weeks. The Tchecho-Slovaks have now been shamed into allowing coal for Vienna to cross their railways. The fact remains that German-Austria cannot buy, for it has nothing to export. It lived on the coal of Bohemia, the wheat of Croatia and the meat of Hungary, and now it stands alone. For the factories and metal works of Vienna there is neither raw material nor market. It used to live

by exchange with all the Hapsburg Dominions. Its territory for supply and demand is now shrunk to a fraction. Until the blockade is raised, no commerce can begin, and even then, until a substantial foreign loan permits the restoration of the worthless paper-currency, it is idle to talk of foreign trade.

Is the popular saying true, that the nation was guiltless of the war? Perhaps there was a mad week or two, which all would now forget, when the Viennese middle-class crowd, well-fed, well-dressed, and gay as was its wont, cheered the troops departing for the front. It has repented of that folly. No one could doubt that, who reads the electioneering placards and fly-sheets. Yesterday along the railway line, young soldiers, still in uniform, stood beside our train, silently holding up their party standards. One was a simple appeal to "vote red." Another was a cry to the women voters, showing the figure of a mother mourning for her son. The third, white on black, represented a file of skeletons beating a military drum, and the inscription: "They call to you to make an end of war." We in England have come through an election in which the chief reproach against a candidate was that he was a pacifist. Here in Austria the effort of every party is to proclaim itself pacifist. No one can dispute the claim of the Austrian Socialists; they never compromised over the war, or ceased demanding instant peace. They turn fiercely on Liberals and

Clericals alike to remind them of their warlike past—their bellicose speeches, their early newspaper articles, their decorations, their profiteering gains. The Liberals, or at least the strongest of their many groups (the middle-class Democrats), make, here and there, the pathetic attempt to discover among themselves a few genuine pacifists, whom they place at the head of their lists. The real issue lies between Socialists and Clericals, with the Democrats as a balancing force. The Socialists stand for the Republic, for pacifism, for war on the profiteer. The Clericals represent a sheeplike crowd of peasants and women, regimented by the clergy behind a peculiarly unscrupulous group of financiers, courtiers, and large landowners. Though they do not openly campaign for the restoration of the Monarchy, that is probably their secret dream, and though they also call for union with Germany, their zeal on this question is open to suspicion. In their manifestoes, however, they pledge themselves both to the Republic and to Union. You will know the issue long before these lines appear in print. It cannot be a Clerical Majority. Any other result is a victory for democracy and peace.<sup>1</sup> Austria is singu-

<sup>1</sup> The result was as I anticipated. The Socialist won a sweeping victory in Vienna, and did well in other industrial districts. The Clerical Party ("Christian-Socialists") carried the more backward rural districts. The Reichsrat is composed of 70 Socialists, 64 Clericals, and 78 others. The voting was, as in Germany and Poland by proportional representation, on the list system, with universal suffrage. Since no

larly quiet and orderly to-day. To me it feels like the quiet of men too weak and anemic to move. Some said, when I expressed that opinion, "the quiet before the storm." No nation will die without one despairing convulsion, and Austria is doomed to death<sup>1</sup> if the blockade continues for

party had an absolute majority, a Coalition was formed from all three parties, but the Socialists have all the chief offices, with Herr Seitz as President, Dr. Renner as Premier, Dr. Otto Bauer as Foreign Secretary, and Dr. Deutsch, a frank and attractive personality, very popular with the soldiers, as War Minister. This party is well disciplined and well led, and its leaders are "intellectuals" to a much greater extent than in Germany. Its organ, the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, is to-day a better newspaper than *Vorwärts*. The Left Wing is led by Dr. Fritz Adler, the son of Dr. Victor Adler, who assassinated the late Premier Stürgkh. He is by far the most popular man in the movement, but though he differs little in theory from the Communists and the more radical of the German Independents, he remains loyally within the party and opposes revolutionary tactics. These Austrian Socialists have been singularly fortunate in their leaders, and contrive to preserve their unity, though the various shades of opinion are well marked. Dr. Bauer is the ablest of the more conservative "Evolutionary" section, but one rarely meets among Austrian Socialists the peculiarly wooden and almost obstructive conservatism which is painfully common in the German "Majority." Another crucial difference should be noted. There are no reactionary mercenary "Free Corps," in Austria, like those which Noske raised in Germany to crush the Spartacists. The only armed force is the "Volkswehr," a militia which is composed almost to a man (the officers included) of Socialist working-men.

<sup>1</sup> I was able to obtain from official sources exact vital statistics for Vienna, but only for the year 1917. The figures for 1918 must be very much worse. Comparing in every case the year 1914 with the year 1917, I will select some salient facts. The number of children born alive fell from 36,000 to 19,000: deaths of children over five rose from 5,000 to 35,000: deaths between the ages of 50 and 70 rose from 8,000 to 13,000, and over



many weeks more. It is not enough, however, to raise the blockade, for bankrupt Austria cannot obtain raw materials, unless the Allies guarantee a loan. Paris, however, is discussing not loans but

70 from 5,000 to 9,000: deaths from tuberculosis (due to the absence of fats) rose from 6,300 to 11,800. Almost all working-class children in Vienna over two years of age were rickety.

Vienna was by no means the worst case. The Viennese medical authorities told me that Linz and the towns of German Bohemia were in a still more distressed condition. One of Mr. Hoover's investigators asked the children in a school of German Bohemia what they had had for breakfast. Out of 47 children 12 had had absolutely nothing and 13 had had black substitute coffee and nothing else. Four only had milk with coffee: the rest had had a dish of wild herbs gathered in the fields. These were the Professors' children: the really poor children had neither boots nor clothes, and could not go to school at all. The lack of clothing was everywhere almost as serious as the lack of food. I saw children dressed in suits neatly made from sacks. In many hospitals children had to be wrapped in paper, for want of sheets and blankets.

Germany was a little less miserable than Austria. None the less, this spring 30 per cent. of the children born to married mothers in Berlin died, and at Düsseldorf, according to the correspondent of the *Morning Post*, 85 per cent. of the babies perished for lack of milk. Professor Starling stated that before the war the average consumption of calories in England was 3,600 per head daily: in Germany, after 1917, the average fell to 1,500. The German miners were in consequence of underfeeding able to produce only 40 per cent. of the pre-war output, and yet they had an extra ration. During one of the weeks of this June the City Council of Berlin stated that 700 cattle and 17 swine were brought in to be slaughtered: the pre-war weekly average was between 5,000 and 6,000 cattle and 25,000 swine.

In May the Swiss Colony in Germany, in a joint appeal to the Swiss Government, stated that 800 deaths per day in Germany were directly attributable to the blockade. The German official reckoning, based on the excess of deaths over pre-war averages,

indemnities. One might as well levy an indemnity on the inmates of a workhouse.

VIENNA, *February 16, 1919.*

was that 1,600,000 civilians had died in Germany and Austria as a consequence of the blockade.

Conditions in "Congress" Poland were in respect to food decidedly better than in Germany, but the famine east of the Bug was immeasurably worse than anything to be found elsewhere.

The raising of the blockade will lead only very gradually and slowly to an improvement in the food supply of Central Europe. The plain fact is that with their currencies depreciated to a fourth and a sixth of the old figure, Germany and Austria can afford to buy only the barest minimum of food from abroad. Nor can they without credit purchase raw materials. Thus the resumption of industry is delayed, but even if they had anything to export, there are in most of the Allied markets embargoes in the way, which prohibit the import of most of the German specialties.

### III

## HUNGER AND REVOLUTION IN VIENNA

THE events in Vienna to-day (April), are a trifle in the civil war which breaks out spasmodically all over Central Europe. No field-guns were used, and the casualties were only five killed and forty wounded. None the less the day had for me a deep and tragic interest. On a small scale one saw at work all the devils that have entered the distracted house of the defeated peoples.

The Communists had called a series of open-air meetings for the unemployed, the returned prisoners, and the disabled soldiers. On the steps of the City Hall (Rathaus) and in front of it a dense crowd had gathered. The place suggests respectability. It stands on the famous "Ring" of boulevards; its ornate nineteenth-century Gothic is as spurious as our own St. Stephen's; and ironically poised above the crowd there pranced in the guise of a medieval knight a figure with the face of the old Emperor Francis Joseph. The crowd seemed tame, silent, depressed, irresponsive, and half the faces even of the demobilized men were as worn and gray as their old trench-clothes.

The speeches sounded as tame as the crowd looked. None of the orators had the lungs, or the

wit, or the magnetism for this work, and their phrases about the misery of the workers, the selfishness of the capitalists, and the so-called treachery of the Socialist Ministers were shabby from long use. A German orator from Hungary described the glories of its social revolution, but a Moderate who followed him posed the unanswerable question: If Vienna made a revolution, could Hungary send her the necessary twelve trains of daily bread? The official speakers damped the meeting at once by announcing that the Communist party had come to the decision that the time is not yet ripe for action. Presently it was announced from the steps that another and larger demonstration in the Prater had formed into a procession and was marching on the Parliament House to present its demands for grants that would compensate the prisoners and the disabled for something of what they had suffered.

The whole broad Ring was in motion. The electric cars had stopped; one saw nothing but the red banners and the masses of moving heads. Twenty thousand demonstrators (to make a rough guess) were before the Reichsrath. It is a pseudo-classic building, in a solid Doric style, and over the mass of revolutionary heads there towered a simpering, gilded Minerva and a whole Olympus of lesser stony gods. Here, too, there were speeches, to me inaudible. I heard only one of them, and it was of three words. "We are hungry," shouted a bluejacket who had climbed a



lamp-post. He repeated it six times, and the crowd chimed in. It was a genial, irresponsible crowd. Some one hoisted "the red rag" on the official Parliamentary flagstaff, and then a humorist tied a neat red bow round Apollo's neck.

There came soon, however, a decidedly aggressive noise. Out of sight people were thundering at a door. The deputation had been refused admission, and on its behalf the hotheads were breaking the obstacle down. Soon one heard the crash of breaking glass, an inciting and exhilarating noise, and I could see street-lads and very young soldiers systematically dealing with the Parliamentary windows. It went on for half an hour or more before the mounted police appeared. A squad of men on fat horses (a well-fed horse is a strange sight in starving Austria) rushed round the building at a gallop. It was not a skilful manoeuvre. The crowd shouted, gave the minimum of ground, and closed up quickly in the rear of the charging police. After a short interval the "watch" (as Vienna calls it) charged again, this time with drawn swords. It dealt some nasty blows as it charged, but the only result was that the crowd, still forming up behind it, stoned it until its rush looked more like a flight than a charge. This time a pistol shot was fired as the watch went by. It came from a tall, well-dressed man, and he certainly fired in the air.

At last the foot "watch" came out from the Parliament with rifles. There was no ceremony,

and none but a visible warning. Advancing like skirmishers among the trees of a little garden, the police fired single shots at close quarters. Close to me a disabled soldier, in uniform, fell wounded. He was shot in the thigh and groaned in pain as a stream of blood poured out on the pavement. His comrades gave "first aid" with practiced hands. They had dealt with such cases every day for four years. Three more were wounded round that little garden. The amazing thing was the conduct of the crowd. It certainly thinned a little, and the more respectable spectators retired to a distance. The "Invalids" (discharged soldiers) held their ground. "Nit laufen" (Don't run) they called after the first instinctive movement, and few ran either fast or far. In a minute or two most of the men and some of the women were pressing forward again, shaking fists at the police and shouting "Murderers!" The peculiar horror of shooting wounded men made every one angry. As for the old soldiers themselves, they cared nothing for rifle-fire, it was too familiar, but all round me they were lamenting that they had themselves no rifles.

After this achievement the police retired once more. An enterprising youth had appropriated Neptune's oar, and with it the business of smashing in the doors was resumed. A coal-cart tried to pass. Instantly the crowd drew it across the road to form a barricade. The coals were used as ammunition against the upper windows. Ten min-

utes later women were gathering up the coals in their aprons to kindle proletarian hearths. So near is want to revolution.

The next intruder was a motor-car. It, too, was stopped; its petrol was the one thing needful. The same youths who had smashed the windows were now setting fire to the woodwork. It made a magnificent blaze, and in ten minutes the mounting flames were blackening the solid gray stones, and a roaring blast from four windows at once was invading the Parliament House. No fire-engine came near it, and the police kept their watch discreetly round a corner.

Parliament was in flames, and the crowd watched it with growing excitement and delight. They were easy to talk to, but they spoke more in exclamations than in sentences. "What do we want with a Parliament?" said one. "All power to the Soviets," said another. "We're all Bolsheviks now," said a third. "Four years ago there were no Bolsheviks. It's the war that has done it." "The war!" The word seemed to touch a spring in every mind, and presently in the little group of disabled soldiers that had gathered round me every one seemed to be talking at once of what they had suffered on the Carso. They talked of ghastly wounds, severed heads, and limbs that sped through the air. It was hard to listen to all they said, and I heard more curses than narratives. Some cursed emperors and capitalists, but in their instinctive way it evidently was

the whole system of society and government in Europe that they damned. The plain man in England blames the Kaiser for the war. These Austrian cripples saw much further, and they watched the flames with savage pleasure, for they were consuming a symbol of a system. Two men on crutches stood in front of the crowd warming themselves luxuriously in the heat. Most conspicuous of all was a lame but active man who skipped about on his two bent legs and a stick, dropping at moments on all fours. His face in the light of the flames was contorted with malice, and wherever he went he incited. Once he could stand upright and give his arm to a girl. To-day, like a four-footed beast broken and maimed for ever, he was taking his revenge on the past.

Loud cheers had broken out, and presently a motor-car came slowly through the crowd. A Volkswehr (militia) officer was in it, and he made a speech under the conflagration. "The Volkswehr sympathizes with the just demands of the people. In twenty minutes it will be here. Don't attack the police. They are afraid of their lives. They must march out safely and their rifles shall be burned. ('No,' said the crowd, 'distribute them among us.') We will keep order. Meanwhile let no one go away. Trust the Volkswehr and wait for us."

The crowd was overjoyed. "The revolution has begun," they said. "The Soviet Republic will be proclaimed." The crowd held its ground, but

much more than twenty minutes passed, and meanwhile there was another charge of the mounted men. It was the most murderous of all. In the dim light I could see human shapes writhing on the ground, and this time we heard many shots from the revolvers of the Communists, as well as from the carbines of the police. Two of the crowd appeared brandishing captured police sabers. Round the corner there had evidently been some casualties among the defenders. The flames burned on. Ambulances went about collecting the wounded. Amid it all a lamplighter quietly passed from lamp to lamp, and little superfluous points of green-yellow light contrasted with the red flames. So does convention go about its work of routine with punctual duty amid the chaos of the world. That lamplighter, who went his habitual way amid the dying and the blaze, seemed to me somehow to resemble a diplomatist.

At last the Volkswehr appeared amid the welcomes of the crowd. The bayonets were not fixed, and almost casually they drew a cordon round the flames. They did not push or charge or threaten. "Comrade, please, a little way back," "Comrade, if you don't mind, will you please step over this railing?" And the comrades obeyed, and were glad to obey.

But what was going to happen? The Volkswehr is a Socialist force. Was it going to make a ring round the Parliament while it burned? It looked like that. But presently one realized that a ma-



chine was playing on the flames from inside. In twenty minutes they were out. The Volkswehr, then, believes in parliaments. There is to be no revolution.<sup>1</sup>

The crowd was melting away. Cordons were being drawn across all the approaches. One little group still remained in the Ring, gathered round something on the ground. A police horse had been shot in the last charge. The police horses are fat. One man carried off a steak, and another a leg. In a few minutes the skeleton and the saddle remained. "We are hungry," the sailor had said. "We are hungry," answered the crowd.

VIENNA, *April 17, 1919.*

<sup>1</sup> Revolution was impossible in Vienna for the simple reason that it depended on the Entente for food. The British Commissioner announced that all supplies of food would cease, if riots took place.

In much more intimate and less defensible ways than this, the Entente, through the Reparation Commission, will virtually govern Austria. The bankrupt State retains only a nominal independence. Its whole fiscal policy, and therefore its whole internal policy, will necessarily depend on the good will of the Commission. That result is by no means displeasing to the upper world of finance and society in Vienna. As a very influential Austrian Liberal politician and financier said to me, "Control by the Entente will be welcome, for it will enable us to resist the schemes of our Socialists." It must be remembered that these ministerial Socialists are of the most moderate evolutionary school.

It is primarily because union with Germany offered the only prospect of escape from foreign tutelage that the Austria Socialists demanded it, and will continue to demand it.

## IV.

### A DEAD CITY IN POLAND

Lodz is a city which boasts that it is the Polish Manchester. In its present plight it brings back memories of a big northern town in England during its holiday week. The sky is clear and of a faint wintry blue. The air is surprisingly clean. The factories, one and all, lift their great chimneys skywards, but no smoke issues from any of them. The gates are shut; the machines are silent, and when dark falls the vast masses of brick are solid bulks of gloom. But it is not fair-week in Lodz. For four years this city has been idle. In the midst of this featureless Polish plain, it had none the less lived by the sea. Its fate was sealed when cotton ceased to enter Bremen harbor, and life will return to it only when cotton can reach it through Danzig. It is a monument to the efficacy of the blockade, which dealt impartially with friend and foe, with Pole and German. The enemy occupation was not in this town wantonly destructive or exceptionally harsh. Metal of all kinds was requisitioned as it was in Germany itself. Brass plates were stripped from the doors. Copper wire was taken from the electric tramways, and a heavy substitute supplied. Some parts were taken from machines, especially from

finishing machines. The fact remains, however, that to the extent of about 75 per cent. the factories are intact. They need only raw cotton and wool, with a stock of tools and driving belts, to start again. The stories of wholesale devastation which are current no further away than Warsaw are a war-time legend. Lodz has suffered, but the suffering fell and falls to-day far more heavily on the workers than on their masters. Capital has survived the war. The great buildings, the ingenious machines, the valuable sites—they are all more or less intact. It is the workers whose children have died, whose garrets are empty of gear, whose starved bodies and slack nerves will be incapable, for many a month to come, of reaching their old standard of skilful and enduring labor.

How does a population of 500,000 contrive to exist for four years without work? I asked myself that question continually during my stay in Lodz, but I could get no satisfactory answer. It was not for fully a year that want began. Poland was full of food in those early months: the usual export, especially of potatoes, was stopped, and prices fell to almost nominal figures. The period of requisitions for German needs came later. Lodz solved its problem partly by taking to smuggling, and partly by reducing its population. Three-quarters of a century ago it was an unpretending village. Saxon weavers established its textile industries, and even now German is the home-language of nearly a third of the population.

The Polish workers were peasants who rarely lost touch completely with the country. They came to town for some years to earn the savings which would enable them to buy an acre or two of land. When the mills stopped, some of these people drifted back to their villages. Others went freely to work in German munition factories, or on German farms. Some thousands, on the plea that they were without means of subsistence, were deported to Germany by force, or more usually by the threat of force. Even now, though the Polish soldiers from the Russian Army and the German migrants have for the most part returned, the population of Lodz is under 350,000. The mortality from the chief diseases of privation, typhus and tuberculosis, has been appallingly high. On the other hand, the Germans put an end to the usual plagues of this dirty and insanitary town. For its water Lodz relies on wells, and the pump stands amid the filth of the back courts in all the older quarters of the town. For sole drainage there are the deep gutters in the streets, and one notes as one walks through them when it is washing day, for then the open sewers run blue. The Russians would never allow improvement; what was good enough for Moscow, they said, would do for Lodz. The Germans cleaned out the wells and the disappearance of typhoid stands to their credit.<sup>1</sup> Let no one imagine, however, that a

<sup>1</sup> Much the worst thing that the Germans did in Poland was the deportation of the unemployed to forced labor in Germany.

hunger-cure of four years is salutary. The children have suffered the most pitiably. I watched some children in a model kindergarten singing their "action" songs. The voices were a very thin pipe. The movements were listless and perfunctory. One could see that even the children had learned to economize energy. There was just one pair of rosy cheeks in the whole school, and it belonged to a boy who had come that week from the country. The real shock came when I began to ask the older children their ages. Where one

Apart from this measure, which was not very extensively applied, their rule was perhaps no harsher than military administration commonly is. They did not adopt in Poland their Belgian tactics of intimidation. They requisitioned heavily, but paid for what they took, or (as in the case of the copper) gave receipts. They did some useful constructive work by laying light railways and the like. They forced the mine-owners of the Dombrover basin for the first time to pay a living wage. They sold rationed flour at a very low price, and they helped the people of the devastated area to rebuild. Every one agreed that the conduct of the garrisons in the towns was good, and even people on whom they had been quartered had few complaints to make, though no one seemed to like them. I heard, always accidentally, of some good deeds: thus an officer quartered in Warsaw opened an asylum for Polish orphans at his own cost, and another started a home for lost dogs. Why the Poles, on the whole, disliked Germans more bitterly than their Russian oppressors is still for me something of a mystery. An able Polish literary man gave me an explanation which seems plausible. Under the Russian censorship no Polish newspaper could mention any Russian iniquity, however gross. On the other hand, all Polish newspapers were allowed, and even encouraged, to make the most of every Polish grievance against German rule in Posen. This unconscious selection over a long term of years had its effect. Propaganda in the modern world weaves the mind of the mass, much as a mill weaves cotton.



expected the answer "nine or ten," it came "thirteen or fourteen." These years will leave their mark on Poland. Even the recruits of twenty who have just been conscripted look like English lads four or five years younger. The medical officer of Lodz told me that among the poor, births have almost ceased, and the reason, he maintained, is simply the physical exhaustion of the women.

Under German rule Lodz suffered silently with that deplorable patience which seems to be the chief characteristic of the Polish worker. The new life began in those magical days of November, when the army of occupation melted suddenly away. The Secret Socialist military organization which looked up to the imprisoned General Pilsudski as its leader disarmed the unresisting garrison. Unarmed lads went up to the sentries and officers in the streets, and walked away with rifles and swords as their trophies. The incredible thing was possible only because the German private was ready for his release and welcomed any excuse to throw off the yoke. Some tore off their iron crosses and trampled on them, and all were unfeignedly glad. In these days under Communist (i.e. Bolshevik) leadership, a Council of Workmen (Soviet) was formed, with its office in the handsome flat where the German Commandant had lived. I doubt if it does or ever really did represent the starving, apathetic masses of Lodz. The elections were carried out on the Russian model in each of the idle factories, and each fifty of the

former workmen were supposed to elect a delegate. It was a very thin muster that attended these meetings; the elections went by a rough-and-ready show of hands, and profane persons say that more delegates than voters were present. None the less for some weeks the Lodz Soviet exercised a little power. The Socialist and Peasant Government of Moraczewski was in office at Warsaw, and most of the rich men in town and country believed that a social revolution was at hand. It was a period of concessions and promises. Everywhere, in town and country, the policy of the Polish Radas (Soviets) was to demand from the employers what they called a "war-indemnity" for the workers. We should call it a "bonus." The usual claim was for 600 marks in a lump sum, for each man (£15 in exchange value, about £5 in purchasing power). With the cheapest kind of workman's shirt at 40 marks, and a pair of shoes with wooden soles at 70 or 80 marks, this "bonus" chiefly represented the means of buying a few clothes for the winter, or taking a blanket out of pawn. The manufacturers offered to meet this claim by lending ten million marks to the Government, but before the money could be raised the Socialist Peasant Cabinet, boycotted by the Entente, had fallen,<sup>1</sup> and with M. Paderewski's coming, the

<sup>1</sup> It fell because Paris would not "recognize" it. At the subsequent elections the Conservative but demagogic "National Democrats" carried the day, because in every pulpit the priests declared that only to this party would the Entente grant money, food, and arms.

propertied class recovered from its panic. There were tumultuous gatherings in Lodz—"riots" is not the word, for no one was hurt. One manufacturer was shut for twenty-four hours in his house. Others disappeared to Warsaw or Switzerland. In the end a few of them compromised the claim for fifty or a hundred marks. When I visited Lodz one felt that the Soviet existed on sufferance: the masters trusted to the firm hand of the police. All day long a squadron of mounted gendarmes, armed with carbine and lance, pranced up and down the principal streets. It was a conspicuous display of force, and the Polish police have rough hands, which readily used their weapons.<sup>1</sup> The police seemed to be feeling their way. On one of the days of my visit a plenary sitting of the Rada had been "proclaimed," as they say in Ireland. The men with the long lances paraded outside the theater where it should have met, and the crowd of workmen melted sheepishly away.

The real success of the Soviet's work was, however, that the Government, represented locally by Socialist or semi-Socialist officials, began the systematic distribution of relief to the unemployed.

<sup>1</sup> The police in Warsaw always carried rifles, and sometimes paraded the streets with fixed bayonets. During a strike, in a working-class street, I watched them searching casual passers-by, and breaking up little groups of even two or three gossiping neighbors by administering vicious blows with the butt of their rifles on the men's backs. A lad was audacious enough to laugh, and he got a lunge from a bayonet to teach him manners.

The intention of the Lodz Soviet was to start public works. Drains, roads, railways—here was the chance to do all that the Russians had neglected. Two difficulties stood in the way, the Polish winter and an empty treasury. The Soviet, with scientific help, estimated with a table of food values in calories what the cost at present prices of a bare subsistence would be. Omitting new clothes and allowing only a little for repairs, it came for a family of two adults and two children to 15 marks a day. A few hundreds are now working at this wage. There are, however, in Lodz and the neighboring textile villages, no less than 253,900 human beings who belong to unemployed families. They are living now on a maximum dole of 5 marks for each family daily. I went over the big orderly department which manages the clerical work of this starving industrial army, and watched the queues at the pay desk. I got into talk with a group of German-speaking women who were waiting. How does one live on 35 marks a week in Lodz? From three of them I collected an average family budget: 20 marks for potatoes, with beet-root as a variation, 10 marks for bread (often uneatable), 15 marks for coal and wood (usually damp). “How much do you allow for meat or butter or milk?” The question raised a far from merry laugh. “We never see such things.” “But,” said I, “you are 10 marks out of the reckoning?” “We generally are,” was the answer, and “then we have to sell something.” It was no exaggera-

tion. I went over some workmen's dwellings, old and new, good and bad. The nearly invariable rule was one room to a family. In one ten people slept on the floor. There was no bed, no bedding, no blanket. In another a table and a small bed remained in an otherwise absolutely empty flat. On the table were three books, a treatise on Logic, another on the higher Mathematics, and a History of Modern Thought. The young man who had pawned everything but his books was, needless to say, a Socialist. One old man still kept his violin, but his wife, he said, had no boots. In all but the most miserable rooms there were lithographs of the Madonna or the Saints upon the walls.

Why does Lodz endure in patience? For me those lithographs of the Saints supply the answer. With all its sky-scrapers and its machines that vie with Lancashire, with its half German civilization, and its memories of roaring trade, Lodz lives in two worlds. Its Jews in their black caps and gowns are straitly bound to the Law. Even its Lutherans tend to pietism. Its Catholic faith is sufficiently alive to be original. It has one church which has broken with Rome and set up a sort of Hussite organization, with married priests and the Eucharist in both kinds. It has a numerous Order of men and women vowed to obedience, chastity, and poverty, who live in common but work at their ordinary trades in shop and mill, without distinctive dress. That expedient was adopted by the ardent piety of the Poles, when



the Russians forbade the entry of any fresh novices into the recognized monastic Orders. These lay monks and nuns, who spin and weave and build, with horny hands, in workmen's clothes, are probably the most effective propagandist force which the Church possesses in Poland. Whenever I entered a church it seemed to be crowded, and crowded with men who would stand unwearied through long sermons and services which had little musical attraction. One could not mistake the deep feeling of the rapt faces or the fervor of the voices that joined in the singing. Religion pervades everything in Poland. There are Catholic Trade Unions, Jewish Trade Unions, and Socialist, which means secular, Trade Unions, each sharply separated from the rest. There is a Clerical Labor Party, a Socialist Labor Party, and no less than three Jewish parties. Of the eight seats in the Diet, the Lodz Socialists won only two, while three went to the Clericalist Labor Group. The obtrusive machinery of repression struck me as superfluous. It is not the lancers that keep starving Lodz in order. Its protector is that Madonna on the garret walls. She can stifle the promptings of unrest, and teach the proletarian to hug his chains. The wonder-worker has performed every moral miracle save one: she has never yet touched the heart of a mill-owner in Lodz.

WARSAW, *March*, 1919.

## V

### ON THE MARGIN OF RUSSIA

I REMEMBER the satisfaction of our more correct newspapers, when the Russians retired in 1915, beyond the River Bug, devastating the country as they went. Our military writers recalled the tactics of 1812, and predicted for the enemy the fate of Napoleon. One reasons otherwise, when one has seen the devastation. It was carried out in Cossack style, with more feeling than plan. At Brest-Litovsk, the town of the ill-omened peace, the greater part of the Jewish quarter lies in ruins. That work was done with comparative thoroughness, and with some zest in the task. The great railway station, however, was only singed. The immense barracks, a small town in itself, was left intact. Even the citadel with its stores was only partly damaged. When the Germans marched in, they found rails and stores for all their needs, and the barracks opened their comfortable doors. They stand to-day as the Russians left them, save only that the Germans have painted moral proverbs and edifying rhymes upon the whitewash. Out in the countryside the same scene of desolation confronts the traveler. Jewish and Catholic villages have been burned with moderate

care. Ruin is all that remains to record the Russian memory. The Germans, to do them justice, have left behind them some traces of constructive work—a bridge here, a road there, an engine-house in a wayside station—and they gave facilities for the rebuilding from the State forests of the peasants' houses of wood.

From all this border belt the population was ruthlessly driven as the Russians retired. Most of it went Far East, to Orenburg on the remotest verge of Europe, and to-day, fleeing from one scene of misery, it returns to another. They are streaming back from starving Russia to starving Poland, and when they reach their villages it is to find the ashes of their homes amid untilled fields. On the way from Warsaw to Brest, at a junction named Lukow, we had met a score of these peasants, women and men, conspicuous in their sheepskin coats and their gay costumes embroidered in red and yellow. They had come that morning to Lukow from a village two hundred miles away, and they were going back by the next train. The purpose of their visit? They point to their sacks of flour. In their own village there is none to buy, nor is there any nearer than Lukow. "Is not the journey very costly?" we ask. They have money, they say. They were driven into Russia by the Cossacks in 1915, and they have only just come back. A man draws out of his belt a wallet full of Russian roubles. They were well paid under the Bolsheviks, they say. And

now? "Our houses are burned, and we have no bread." The train came in, and they scurried off to their military truck labeled "40 men 6 horses." An old woman falls under her sack. A young girl bursts into tears as she tries to lift her burden. Shouting, pushing, thumping, the guard at last has packed them in.

Of the inhabitants who escaped the Cossacks, not all remained at home. Some went freely to work in Germany, but thousands were deported by force. In the great empty barracks at Brest you may see specimens of both these migrations, with detachments of war-prisoners in addition. The families camp in the big rooms, and an overworked superintendent attempts to sort out the sick for a hospital which lacks every necessity save human kindness. There is no white bread, no sugar, no milk to be had, even for the hospital, and of drugs there are next to none. The refugees return with typhus among them, but disinfectants are almost wholly lacking, and of sulphur there is none. The few doctors are busy all day among the refugees and in the fever hospital of the town. Out in the villages there is neither doctor nor nurse, nor any one to aid. Typhus is a winter disease, and the day of its power is nearly over now, but it will be followed by influenza, dysentery, and cholera as the summer draws on.

Brest, of the cruel peace, is no happy place to-day. It is still largely a Jewish town. An old long-bearded Jew, dressed, as all Orthodox Jews

are dressed in the East, in a long black gown and a little black cap, led me to the Rabbi, praising him as we walked. In the Rabbi's study a woman, wearing some red and white ritual stole over her dress, was reading what I took to be prayers, as I entered. It was the eve of Purim. She went on undisturbed, and spoke to me only when she had reached a stopping-place. The room was lined with a big library which contained no books in any profane language. In this little cell the Word was in Hebrew. The Rabbi himself was a gentle old man, with a worn and spiritual face, which recalled to me Spinoza's, save for the long gray beard. He talked a rapid and very peculiar German which was apt to verge into Yiddish, but we contrived to understand each other. He first told me the tale, which I was to hear from every Jew in a sort of crescendo, until I reached Pinsk. The town lived in daily fear under the Polish military occupation. It must be explained that the Polish officers are firmly convinced that every Jew is a Bolshevik, and even that every Jewish house (as the General put it) harbors a Jewish spy or a Red Guard in hiding. It is true that some of the Jewish Socialist youth of this district have joined the Bolsheviks, but an honest man who believes that these old long-bearded Orthodox Jews feel anything but horror at the thought of a social revolution must have parted with his wits. The result of this belief is that the Jews live in a state of minor terror—the technical name is “minor



siege.” It is a crime to be out after seven at night, and one hears in the dark the frequent crack of the sentries’ rifles. All Hebrew or Yiddish inscriptions have been removed from shops, schools, and Jewish hospitals. I was told in some detail of local Jews who had been shot as Bolsheviki by field court-martial. The Jewish community vouched for their innocence, but it could only plead, after the event, that they should not be buried as criminals. Every day, it seems, the soldiers sally out into the street, catch the first Jew they meet, and drag him with insults, or even with blows, into the barracks, to perform menial duties unpaid. Several of the Jews of Brest recounted to me their personal experience of this treatment, and they declared that as many as twenty cases of the kind occur in a day. At Pinsk I heard the same thing, and even at Warsaw this system went on in the first month after the Germans left. The Rabbi took me to visit the crowded families who once had lived in the burned quarter of Brest. They were living, camped in little family groups in a big barnlike upper room, sick and whole, young and old, closely packed together. Some were ill, and there was no doctor. The Jewish doctor, it seems, had died some days before. “Why not call a Polish doctor?” I asked. The answer was a bitter smile and a gesture that denoted the impossible. All were hungry, but I saw the accounts of the incredible sums which the local community had expended to buy them bread.

These Jewish refugees, let me add, were very much cleaner, and more careful of decency and sanitation, than most of the Christians in the same case.

Pinsk lies a weary journey of eight hours by train from Brest. Ours was a military train—there are no others—and the trucks were filled partly with young soldiers going to the front, and partly with peasants who had made a distant excursion to buy bread. A fierce east wind was blowing, and icicles hung from the station pumps. Our engine leaked, and it had to be watered by hand with buckets, a process that took at each station on an average an hour. The Polish soldiers were mostly youths. None of them had great-coats, and not all of them had uniforms. In this state, by full moon, I watched them marching out to face the Bolshevik, who are skirmishing twelve miles beyond the town. In the town itself there marched slowly, at the goose-step, a patrol of Russian “White Guards.” All of them were officers. They were well dressed, and physically splendid men. They sang as they moved slowly onward, a haunting melancholy Russian chorus. For them too in this town of misery one tried to spare pity. They have lost everything save the hope of vengeance.

Poland proper has not enough to eat, and what it has is fabulously dear. But Poland proper is not literally starving. East of the River Bug begins the zone of famine. At Pinsk one enters

a sample of Russia. It has changed hands thrice in six months. The Germans were followed by the Ukrainians (Petliura's men): they were driven out by the Bolsheviki: the Poles took over the starving town (only a madman would defend it) three weeks ago. East of the Bug, it must be explained, the Polish population is a small minority, consisting of the landlords and a small part of the townsmen. The towns and larger villages are overwhelmingly Jewish. The peasants are in the south, Ukrainian, and in the north, White Russians. Their distinguishing characteristics are land-hunger and Orthodoxy. Some, indeed, had already sacked the Polish manor-houses, as a preliminary to the division of the land. The Bolsheviki, after a brief stay, left neither a clean record nor any constructive monument behind them, but while they certainly pillaged to some extent, it must also be recorded that in the town the Bolsheviki sacrificed no lives. Their pillaging in any event was much less than that which the Polish troops carried out in the first hours of their arrival. The Jews maintain that their community lost no less than three million roubles. That sounds like an exaggeration, but I heard details from individual Jews (of course, without proof), who were respected in their own circles, of robberies ranging from 5,000 to 100 roubles. So far, the Polish occupation is by far the harshest which Pinsk has experienced, from Tsarist days downwards. The military know that they are unwel-

come, and they seek, because their forces are wholly inadequate, to secure themselves by severity. The leaders of the Ukrainian (Orthodox) population are mostly in prison and their newspapers have been suppressed. "We know," said the young officer who acted as commandant of the town, "that the villages are hostile. It has been decided to burn some of them, and decimate the inhabitants." That young man was in a responsible position of command, and he appeared to mean what he said.<sup>1</sup> For this Jewish-Orthodox land under Polish rule I can see no happy future. Military severities will cease sooner or later. Flour and medicines from America arrived on the day after I left. But the agrarian and political problems remain. The Polish plan is to colonize this country with Polish settlers, which is much what the Germans did in Posen.

Nearly every shop in the broad streets of wooden houses is closed. There is literally nothing to sell. The four Jewish Co-operative Stores are all closed. I found the Catholic Co-operative Store open, however, in a Franciscan Monastery on whose walls a late seventeenth-century fresco showed the saint preaching in a powdered wig and peach-colored coat to the birds. I examined

<sup>1</sup> This threat was spoken with so much brutality, and accorded so well with all that I observed of the treatment of the Jews in Pinsk by the Polish officers, that I determined to report it. The context of the Commandant's speech showed that he meant that it had been literally decided to make an example by shooting



its whole stock with care. Its stock consisted of salt, and of literally nothing else. Up till the departure of the Germans there was food in Pinsk. The ration was small, and the quality was bad, but it was very cheap and it was fairly distributed. Since they left, the town has come each week a little nearer to complete starvation. The price of a loaf of nearly uneatable "black" bread is now from five to nine "Tsar's roubles," and even so it is hard to find. On the day of my visit, the Jewish Orphanage and the Almshouse were entirely without either bread or fuel. I went round a number of homes in working-class streets. A few families still had a stock of potatoes (there are none to buy), and the rest were living chiefly on chestnuts or carrots or beet-root. The police told me that men and women frequently faint from hunger in the streets, and I actually saw two corpses of men skeletons, half-clothed in rags. The people are now almost too weak to help themselves, and though there are woods not far away, it is hard to find a man, and harder still to find a horse, fit to fetch fuel. The birth-rate had fallen

one in ten. On my return to Warsaw I went straight to the President, General Pilsudski, who listened with attention but without surprise to what I told him, and promised to take prompt action. Ten days later, as the Jews of Pinsk were holding a meeting of their Community to discuss measures for the relief of the poor, the troops surrounded the building and arrested those present to the number of seventy. Without even the pretense of a trial and without any definite charge one in two were shot on the spot.



last year (1918) from a normal thirty-one per thousand to seven. The death-rate had risen from fifteen to twenty-nine. The figures to-day must be very much worse. Old women came crying round me like gibbering Homeric ghosts, so light they seemed, murmuring that they were cold, and children with white lips, pinched faces, and transparent hands. This day was, I hope, the worst for Pinsk. Five trucks of American flour were expected in the evening. That is a very small store, and when the next will come no one knows. For the villages no help is yet in sight. Most of them lie far from the railway, and even on the railway the few trucks and engines are all required for the war against the Bolsheviks. Poland (always responsive to Parisian opinion) has rejected repeated overtures of peace from Moscow. For an indefinite time to come this hungry country must take its chance among military needs.

Another vivid memory stands out from this journey to the edge of Russia. It is of a night spent halfway between Brest and Pinsk in the lonely country-house of a Polish landlord. A courteous scholarly man, with a tall ancestral tree, he spent his life in a library well stocked with ancient books. He had some beautifully printed sixteenth-century classics, but I think he read the Fathers more often than his Elzevir Horace. I looked at the names and dates in these books, which showed how this race, living amid the Russian darkness of this Borderland, had handed

down its Latin and Catholic culture from father to son through three centuries. This old stock had descended at last to the simplicity of barbarism. Out beyond the little wood, with its friendly crows, amid which the house stood, the land was desert. The village had been burned, and the peasants had followed the Cossacks somewhere over the gleaming Pripet marshes into the depths of Russia. The fields had gone out of cultivation, and this lonely civilized man camped amid the ruin like some Crusoe on his island. His son indeed lived with him, a spirited young man of nineteen or twenty; I had taken him at first for a retainer of the house, for he wore the roughest peasant clothes, and I could hardly believe my ears when he addressed me unexpectedly in French. The war had ended his schooling, and now he drove the plow and planted the potatoes on which he and his father subsisted. The house was all but empty of furniture. Twice a Bolshevik band had sacked it from cellar to garret, once the Bolsheviks had threatened his life, and the Polish troops as they advanced had taken the little that the Bolsheviks had left. Money and clothes, horses and cattle, and the family heirlooms of many generations—all were gone. The old man none the less was serene. A cousin who shared our dinner of potatoes was in still worse case: his peasants had burned his house down, and driven him out into the wilderness. Our host looked back on the goings and comings of Cossacks and Ger-

mans<sup>1</sup> and Bolsheviks, and still he survived, and his home stood foursquare. He pointed to an image of the Virgin over the doorway: "Who knows," he murmured, "perhaps it was She who saved me." His most cherished treasures too had tempted none of the robbers. We sat in his library talking and handling the books through half the night. He talked of Carlyle, for whom he had a peculiar veneration, and then digressed to Mary Stuart, whose history, romantic Pole that he was, he had studied with minute care. He talked with much eloquence of Cicero, and the frailties of that eminent stylist moved him to a contempt more vivid and passionate than he felt for any living statesman. He talked of the storks and the crows, and other happy creatures whom he loves in the wood around his home. He talked of his forefathers who had played a man's part in Polish history, and as he said good-night, he recited for me the musical prayer in Latin verse that tradition ascribes to Mary Stuart. I bade him and his empty house a regretful good-by, for it seemed to me that the ruined culture to which it belonged is a thing more gracious and dignified by far than the monstrous births of our age. Another decade of wars and blockades and revolutions, and every relic of learning and humanity may be swept away from the Rhine to the Volga. There must

<sup>1</sup> So far from robbing him, the Germans during their stay had improved his property for him.

have been, when the barbarians surged over the Roman provinces in the twilight centuries, lonely villas, left standing amid the ruins of the Empire, in which old men survived, conning Greek manuscripts in pillaged rooms, while the Goths enjoyed their wealth. Not all at once, nor without the flicker of a false dawn, did the darkness compass them around.

As the months of desolation lengthened into years, these old men hoped for the return of civilization, and dying prayed that their sons would live to see it. Their sons lived like barbarians, dimly remembering the interrupted studies of their youth. Their sons' sons were barbarians born.

WARSAW, *March* 28, 1919.

## VI

### THE POLISH JEWS

ONE goes to Poland with a firm conviction that its civilization is of the West. Latin was the language of its ancient culture. Did not Copernicus lay the basis of our modern outlook at Cracow? One feels, as one cannot feel in Russia or Turkey, that the ancestors of its people passed through the same formative influences, Renaissance, Reformation and "Enlightenment," as our own. One sight seemed to contradict these impressions even in the first walk through Warsaw streets. The snow was on the ground. The sledges, the crows, and the gilded Byzantine church suggested Russia. But the Jews in the streets reminded me of Salonica. Here was a race living, by its own choice, that life of separation which is normal in the East. In Turkey one expects it. Every race has there its own language, its own costume, its own religion. The Jews there are not more separate than Greeks or Armenians. In Poland this Eastern phenomenon surprises. Even in the larger towns the majority of the men, including some who are wealthy, continue to wear their traditional costume—the black gown, the little black cap, and the inevitable beard and the peculiar curl prescribed by ritual. These men in the strange



garb talk no Polish among themselves: their speech is still the German jargon which they brought with them long centuries back from the Rhine. Thus it happens that from his first years of childhood the young Pole grows up with the sense that these strangely dressed men with the incomprehensible speech are foreigners in his land. Why it is so, I do not know. You will see no black gowns in Hungary, nor hear Yiddish in the streets, and the Hungarian Jew speaks Magyar at home, and feels himself a Hungarian citizen.

The outer garb covers a personality which is as little Polish as the dress is European. The average Orthodox Jew, even in the middle class, has grown up in a mental world which nowhere touches that of his Polish neighbor. His education has been almost exclusively religious. He knows Hebrew as few of us ever knew our Latin. I have heard poor Jewish children talking Hebrew as they played on the streets. His wits have been exercised in the gymnastic of Talmudic casuistry. Of European history or modern science he knows (or used to know) nothing. If he is an idealist (and this persecuted race is rich in idealists), it is not the Polish nationalist dream or the Socialist Utopia, or the scientist's passion to know the causes of things, that allure him, but rather his secret, disdainful, theocratic vision of a chosen race true to its destiny and bound by its law. It is not easy to admire the wisdom which takes as

its chosen field for idealism the obstinate resolve to observe the Sabbath rather than Sunday as the weekly day of rest. But one must bow with a sort of veneration before the self-sacrifice of this race which in Poland, has handicapped itself in the daily competition of industry because it will not compromise with the law. The mental gulf between this old world and any modern culture is deep. It is so deep that Jewish girls of the middle class, who have had a more conventional modern education, feel themselves aliens at their marriage with young men of their own race who were bred in the Orthodox lore.

If the reader asks why the Poles, alone of all races professedly Western in their culture, live with this impassable gulf between themselves and their Jews, I am somewhat puzzled to find the answer. Firstly, they were not, until to-day, a ruling people: they could not attract others to themselves. Secondly, there are historical reasons. It may be partly a consequence of the wide autonomy, legal and fiscal, conceded by the old Polish Kingdom to the Jews. It is probable also that the Russians deliberately widened the gulf. Thirdly, the cultural level of the Poles themselves was too low for a bridge to be built on an intellectual basis. The Jew had his own ancient culture. The poorer Pole, unlettered and untaught, possessed no culture at all. His one spiritual possession was his Catholic faith. It is, I think, the traditional association of Polish nationality with the

Catholic religion, which makes the barrier against the Jews so difficult to lower. The Pole emphasized his Catholicism against his Prussian Protestant conquerors in the West, and his Russian Orthodox conquerors in the East. The few Protestant Poles in East Prussia and Silesia lost all sense of their Polish nationality. Ask a peasant or a woman in any mixed area if he or she is a Pole, and the affirmative answer will usually be, "I am a Catholic." I have often heard that answer myself, and for me it gave the clue. In Hungary the Calvinist minority was always as much Magyar as the Catholic majority, and religion was never reckoned a part of nationality. In Poland as in Turkey, nationality and religion are one idea. The Jews are in sentiment excluded from the Polish nation because they are not Catholics. A Jew is really adopted as a Pole, only when he compounds with the world by accepting baptism.

So far as I could gather, the open preaching of anti-Semitism and the organized persecution of the Jews in Poland are comparatively recent phenomena. A Pole will always begin any conversation about the Jews by recalling the traditional tolerance of the Polish State. That is, I fear, a myth: it was on the persecution of both of the Protestants and the Orthodox that Prussia and Russia fastened as a pretext for the first Partition. The fact is that modern anti-Semitism in Poland has an obvious economic root. Until the

middle of last century the Jews were the only middle class in Poland, and the only trading class. Poles were either landowners, peasant owners, or laborers. In the last fifty years Poles have increasingly taken to trade and even to industry, though the names of most of the larger firms are still preponderantly German or Jewish. Usually these magnates are baptized Jews. This belated industrial development in Poland, delayed by the heavy hand of Tsardom, brought Jewish and Christian traders and shopkeepers, when it came at length, into sharp competition. As in Austria, so in Poland, this economic competition was obvious material for the political agitator. M. Roman Dmowski, the founder of the old National Democratic ("N.D.") Party, did what Lueger and the "Christian Socialists" did in Vienna: he roped the small middle-class man, who felt the pressure of Jewish competition, into an essentially Conservative Nationalist Party. Before the war his was a rusophil policy; he was a favorite at the Tsar's Court, and represented in the Duma a tendency that was relatively reactionary even in that backward assembly. In Poland, though his party relied for funds on the big landowners, it won popular support by a violent and entirely reckless campaign against the Jews. To this party belong not merely M. Dmowski, by far the cleverest of Polish politicians, but also M. Paderewski, and most of the present ministry. From specimens of their election literature which I saw, one might suppose

that they fought the first election in free Poland mainly on the Jewish issue, combined with the subtle suggestion that most Socialists are Jews, and all Socialists Bolsheviks. Ugly illustrated posters and leaflets, issued officially by this party, depicting the Jew as a serpent or a vampire, appealed to the numerous illiterate electors, and the newspaper press kept the agitation going from day to day by incessant anti-Jewish articles. I procured copies of some of these sinister popular appeals to race-hatred, and in the municipal elections a little later actually myself saw a "N.D." car, decorated with all the Allied flags, scattering an anti-Jewish leaflet in the main street of Warsaw. For the present state of mind of brutal fanaticism which breaks out in massacre, this ruling party is directly responsible. Itself at bottom the party of the big landed interest, it has used anti-Jewish prejudice as a demagogic appeal, in order to win the masses from the Socialist and Peasant parties.

I must in fairness mention the charges usually advanced against the Jews. There is, of course, as everywhere, the charge of usury. Because many or most of the town dealers and retailers are Jews, they are said to be the causes of high prices and the food shortage. In point of fact the real reason for the anger of the Polish trading class against the Jews, is that their margin of profit is so small that even the co-operative societies can hardly compete with them. Poland is



suffering from an acute currency crisis, but the people are too ignorant to understand the real causes of the decline of the value of the mark. The economic plight of the Polish workers is desperate, mainly because the rise of wages has not followed the rise of prices. Prices rose ten times: wages only three to five times. No doubt dealers, including Jews, did hoard and speculate, but the more guilty "profiteer" was probably the Polish landlord and farmer. It is the obvious cue of the profiteer, and the employer who will not raise wages, to blame the Jews for the high cost of living. Again, they are accused of being pro-German, partly because they rejoiced at the defeat of Tsardom, and partly because the Germans, during the occupation, found it convenient to employ them, since they all speak German. That fact attracted notice, only because the Russians had, on principle, refused to employ any Jews at all. Half Polish society, one is apt to forget, was pro-German, or, as it was called, Activist, until the crash, and the President himself, General Pilsudski, fought most gallantly on the Austro-German side against Russia. Elsewhere it is counted a crime that they are neutral in the racial feuds of the Poles against the Ukrainians. The most recent charge is that all Jews are Bolsheviki. Some young Jews are certainly Communists, but the mass of the race detests the thought of social revolution as it detests every new thing.

I will not attempt to describe the successive waves of pogroms which have swept over the Polish Jews since November last. I happened to be in Poland during a relatively quiet interval. I saw no pogroms, but I heard enough in my talks with Polish officials, officers, and politicians to understand the atmosphere of the pogrom. I myself heard the Gendarmerie Commandant of the town of Pinsk declare in cold blood that he would have to shoot one in ten of the population. About ten days later thirty-five Jews were shot in Pinsk by the troops without charge or trial. Sometimes the number of killed may rise (as at Vilna and Lemberg) as high as sixty and seventy, sometimes whole streets of Jewish houses are burned down, more often there is pillage, beating and insult, but little or no killing. I refrain from dwelling on this painful subject of pogroms, because, though one cannot insist too sharply on their cessation, it would be a grave mistake to suppose that they are the real evil. Let me say, once, in plain language, that these Catholic Polish Christians do on occasion, with their troops at their head, massacre as brutally as ever Turks massacred Christians, and the authorities show a Turkish tolerance to these outrages. But pogroms, after all, are only the occasional aggravation of a daily martyrdom. The same fanaticism shows itself in every relation of life.

Jews have said to me repeatedly that no Christian employer will employ a Jew: certainly there

are many big employers who on principle exclude Jews. A large number of Jews (they are one-third of the population), barred out under Russian rule, were taken into the service of the Warsaw tramways during the German occupation. They were all instantly dismissed at the Polish Revolution. In a typical country town (I speak of what I saw at Vloclawek) the big modern factories will employ no Jews. They can work only in a few small home-industries of their own. That is true also of Lodz. Some of the factories belong to Jews, but even in them no Jewish operatives can be employed. The fact is that anti-Semitism has now filtered down into the working-class. Polish workmen will not work with Jews. Jewish workmen must create their own separate Trade Unions. When, at the Revolution, a Workers' Council (Rada), on the Soviet model, was created in all the towns, the Socialist leaders had the greatest difficulty in persuading the Polish workmen to admit the Jewish organizations, and when I left Poland, at the end of March, they had not everywhere succeeded. West of Poland Socialism knows no barriers of race. In Poland the Jewish Socialists must keep apart, in their own separate organization, the Bund. Though the Polish Constitution imposes no legal disability on the Jew, I believe it is the fact that no unbaptized Jews (or I shall say, virtually none) have been admitted to official posts or to any rank in the civil service. My note-books are full of little details

of acts of oppression against Jews—interferences with their clubs, with their newspaper, and open brutality in the street. One heard of these things everywhere. The broad facts are enough. No Jew was safe from daily insult, while a Chinese wall excluded the Jews from every region of Polish social life, save in the most advanced circles. The whole condition of this society rather resembled that of a mixed white and colored community than a European land.

The Poles, politically and culturally an immature and backward people, have won the power to make their land a hell for its three million Jews, by no merit of their own, but simply by the victory first of Germans over Russians, and then of the Allies over the Germans. What they do to other races is some concern of ours. If the diagnosis of this essay be correct then undoubtedly the root of the evil, whether Poles or Jews be to blame for it, is the excessive isolation of this essentially foreign racial element. To conclude, however, as the Poles do, that the cure for this evil is to bring the Jews into the framework of Polish nationality, is surely to betray a complete ignorance of the meaning of the idea of nationality. Race and language are trifles compared with the historic gulf between these two peoples. Each has suffered, each has struggled, but never in the same cause and with the same sentiments. Mazzini wrote in vain, if we are going to say

that aliens who share none of the traditions, none of the memories, none of the hopes, none of the religious faith of the Poles, can partake of Polish nationality. Good citizens of the Polish State they may be, if they are permitted to wish it well, but even this they will not be, until the Poles cease the effort to beat them into patriotism. None the less, this Polish reasoning is sound, in so far as it betrays a perception that some social bond, some idea of union, some human tie must be discovered, if their State, with its three million Jews, is to cohere. The bond cannot be nationality. Let them seek it in common work. In this modern world, it is much more important that men produce, shoulder to shoulder, and share common interests as workers and creators, than it is that they profess the same historic nationality. When Jewish workers are admitted to every factory and to the civil service, when the separate Trade Unions, and the separate Socialist workers' parties fuse, the Jewish problem will be solved in Poland. Liberalism, one may say in passing, exists in Poland neither as an idea nor as a party. The idea of Socialism and its work for common human ends, free from this curse of racial fanaticism, is the one force in Poland which gives any hope for the future, and it is only in so far as the weak and backward Polish Socialism movement grows in courage and numbers and fidelity to its ideas, that any radical solution can be found for the Jewish problem.



Failing this radical social solution none of the obvious remedies seems to me particularly hopeful. The political vote is useless to the Jews. Jewish parties were and are sharply divided into many groups with divergent policies. The Orthodox stand by themselves. Their Socialists are at war with their middle-class. They were often robbed of their voting chances by skilfully arranged electoral areas. But if they had won a proportionate number of seats in the Diet, their case would have been rather worse than better. If they had become a balancing party, with a big vote to sell, the answer to this use of power would have been only a sharper application of the rod of persecution. In some of the Radas (Workmen's Councils) they had this balancing power between the Left (Communists) and Right (Polish Socialist Party), and they hardly dared to use it, because they knew that any act or decision which would cause it to be said that Jews are exerting a political influence, would only expose them to further persecution. It is dangerous to be a Jew, but most dangerous of all to be a Jew who can be accused of wielding power.

If it is of their rights as a minority that one thinks, then obviously it is important that they should have their own schools, which must receive their fair share of public money. The control of these schools ought to be in the hands of the Jewish community, on a democratic basis. While they clearly ought to teach the Polish

language and history, the instruction must begin in the mother-tongue, which is Yiddish. Cultural autonomy on these lines is a right which must be secured to every minority in Europe.

It is on this matter of schools that controversy mainly turns in Poland. To me it seems curiously unreal. Here is a race liable to be massacred on occasion, habitually insulted in its daily life, excluded in fact from the State's service, and barely able to live by minor crafts and petty trade, because it is excluded by sheer fanaticism from the chief industries, and we offer it as a solution—Jewish schools. The League of Nations, we are told, will impose certain obligations on the Polish State in regard to its Jews. The League as it exists to-day is primarily a Grand Alliance. Poland feels herself an ally, and is regarded in Paris as the indispensable barrier against Germany and Russia. French officers are training and even commanding its army. French diplomacy, strongly clerical in its tendencies, is the only effective representative of Europe or the League in Warsaw to-day. The Allies failed to stop the little war of the Poles against the Ukrainians. They will fail, even if they try, to stop the persecution of the Jews. No Alliance ever yet contrived to control an ally. From an ally one wants an army, not virtue. While the League remains a militant alliance against the Germans and Bolsheviks, it will achieve nothing for the Polish Jews, or for any other minority. It will no more

succeed in controlling the Poles in this matter than Mid-Victorian England in the Crimean days could control the Turks, while it regarded them as allies. Its diplomatic agents will move in Polish society, where no one meets a Jew, and only a very strong and exceptional man will risk his local popularity for the sake of the Jews. To place minorities (be they German or Jewish) under Poles and Tchechs, and then to imagine that all will be well because some magic League of Nations will watch over them, is a pitiable self-deception. The Poles understand very well what their rôle in Europe is. Their rôle is to fill a rather onerous part in the French strategy of encirclement, and to keep a strong conscript army on the Vistula, while the French keep watch on the Rhine. They know very well that if they fill this rôle, they may treat Jews, Germans, and other minorities as they please. That is a corollary of the new militarism. The way of escape? I see none from this false start. But more and more, day by day, the Polish Jew, like every wronged race and class in Europe, will seek his salvation in Socialism.

On one fact, however, it is not too late to insist. The boundaries of Poland have not yet been drawn on its Eastern side. Its armies are occupying the country beyond the Bug, but as yet they have no formal "mandate." Here the Jewish population is even denser than in Poland proper. Brest, Vilna, Pinsk, and the rest, are overwhelmingly

Jewish towns. This is the old Russian "Pale," in which even the villages are often Jewish, and since the devastation of 1915, when the Cossacks drove out the Orthodox peasants, the Jews have even taken to tilling the soil. One might press this case as strongly from the Lithuanian, the White Russian or the Ukrainian standpoint, for the Polish population here is a negligible minority. All these races will be wronged, but more especially the Jews, if the Polish frontier is drawn beyond the true Polish racial limits. I know a town in the Pale which had lived under Tsarist Russian, German, Ukrainian, Bolshevist, and Polish rule. I asked the local Jews which, from their standpoint, was the best and the worse. They had nothing, as Jews, against Germans or Bolsheviki. Neither persecuted. They all agreed that Polish rule was decidedly worse than that of Tsardom. The leaders of the Ukrainians, I imagine, would have said the same thing if I could have questioned them, but they were all in prison.

## VII

### POLAND AS BARRIER

As I write, the Polish Constituent Assembly is engaged in discussing two resolutions which express the will of the Polish nation to conclude an alliance and a military convention with the Powers of the Entente. London seems incredibly far away, and New York as distant as the next century. It is not easy to bring this resolution into any relation with the projects of disarmament and a League of Nations which still, one gathers, occupy public opinion at home.<sup>1</sup> For the average educated Pole the League of Nations is at best a doubtful dream. The reality is that Poland contrived in the first months of her existence to involve herself in war with all her neighbors on all four fronts at once. Talk to a Pole of the League of Nations, and he will answer that the idea is alluring, but will it guard his four frontiers? The

<sup>1</sup> I wrote this under the belief that Alliances and the League are incompatible, or as Mr. Wilson put it, that there must be "no league, alliance, or special covenants or understandings within the general and common family of the League of Nations." I even supposed that he meant what he said, when he declared that he would join "no combination of power which is not a combination of all of us." Clearly an alliance of France with Poland, Bohemia, and Roumania is no worse than an alliance of Britain and America with France.



idea of an impartial League may possess a certain sublimity, but he prefers a sure friend to a just judge.

On public occasions it is of the Entente that the Poles are accustomed to speak. In private they talk only of France. Indeed, when one travels in Central Europe, in Vienna as in Warsaw, one perceives that of all the Allies, it is France alone that counts. Hers is the dominant army, hers is the coveted alliance. It is not too much to say that she is in process of establishing a military hegemony over Europe. The Poles propose to place themselves under the supreme command of Marshal Foch, and expect the early arrival of a French staff to instruct, and in effect to control, the Polish army. The idea of a military convention is universally accepted. Poland has accepted the rôle which Allied oratory and the Allied Press assign to her. She is to be the "barrier" of "civilization" against Germany on the one hand and Russia on the other. Whether the actual military convention with France, will specifically pledge her to act against Russia, as well as against Germany, is not yet known. In any event she receives her place in the ring of little States, which are to receive their marching orders from Paris. Germany will once again adjust herself to the old prospect of a war on both fronts, and the Poles proudly prepare themselves for the rôle of "barrier" that has been assigned to them. In the French military system Poland occupies the place which Russia has vacated. She is the Eastern half of the mechanism of encirclement. That old

saying of Napoleon's, that Poland is "the key-stone of the European arch," is current once more. The magic of the old Napoleonic tradition still works, and Polish families count with immense satisfaction the ancestors who were loyal even at Leipzig. The youth of Poland is not fatigued by years of war as the rest of Europe is. Its romantic impulse is unsatisfied, and Poland aspires to play her part in Europe—even the part of a barrier.

One cannot live for a month among this gentle and hospitable people without acquiring a keen sympathy for them. In me it works critically. This rôle which the Allies propose—or the only Ally with whom men seem to reckon here—may seem to the Poles an honor. To me it rings like a doom. Five and twenty millions of Poles amply provided with the causes, if not with the means, of strife are to face sixty million Germans in the West and a hundred million Russians in the East. The last intention which Nature was aware of, when Poland emerged from the glaciers, was to make of it a barrier. From Germany, across the whole land inhabited by Poles, stretches an almost featureless plain. A more dreary and monotonous landscape in winter I have never seen. The Russians in their barbaric way were right. The only way to make an effective barrier of Poland is to devastate it, as in 1812 and again in 1915 they devastated its eastern region. If the Poles realize their economic plans, that pitiable defense is gone. The legendary Polish mud will be traversed by

causeways. Railways will lead to every lonely village. Canals will drain the waterlogged soil, and even the famous marshes of the Pripet will be dry. Such a Poland would be no barrier, but rather a broad highway. Then, of course, it is the manhood of Poland which will be the wall. The French are good instructors. If one assumes that a partly ruined France can afford to create a modern army in Poland, with all the necessary fortifications and war-industries, the thing can in time be done—always provided that Poland receives her naval port at Danzig, and, on either side of the roads that lead to it, controls no mere “corridor” but a broad defensible territory.

Let no one suppose, however, that the creation of this Polish army will be morally or materially an easy task. To-day this army lacks everything save spirit. One may see the young recruits in Warsaw marching through the streets with the “Waacs,” and those fantastic Polish bluejackets who constitute a navy without ships. They sing as they march old songs and new, sad songs and gay, for this race is gifted in its emotional life. It sings itself into its four wars, ready to win again the laurels of prowess which history, a niggard in all else, has never denied to the Poles. I saw two companies at Pinsk march out against the Bolsheviki. It was night; a bitter east wind was blowing, and the tread of the men rang on ground frozen by many degrees of frost. They had no greatcoats and no blankets. Some had no uni-

forms, and some had no shirts. Their rifles were of three patterns. Their rations were one tin of soup, a little bread, and a little substitute-coffee daily. Morally, the army, for all its superb patriotism, is somewhat divided. One school, the young democratic element, trained in General Pilsudski's Legion, fought on the side of the Central Powers, because for them Tsarist Russia was the enemy of enemies. The senior officers, however, for the most part are Poles from beyond the borders, sons of landowning families, who made a military career in the Russian army. They are steeped in Russian traditions of discipline, imbued with the Russian aristocrat's attitude towards the peasant and the private, disposed to intervene in strikes with the knout. They have, in a word, the mind of the "White Guards." Two years ago these Legionaries and these Russo-Polish officers were facing each other in the trenches at Pinsk. To-day they are creating a Polish army. One school or the other will dominate.

What, next, is the economic plight of this people which is invited to make of itself a rampart? Its industry stands still. The cotton mills of Lodz have been idle for four years.<sup>1</sup> On the books of

<sup>1</sup> In March the British Economic Mission to Poland recommended the instant supply of adequate raw materials to restart the textile industry ruined by the blockade. By the end of June some cotton had arrived, supplied by the Americans. The British Wool Control, though admittedly we had ample and indeed excessive stocks, refused to supply any for Poland. The difficulty was credit.



the labor exchanges there are already of unemployed urban workers and their dependents a quarter or even a third of the population of the towns. Food prices have risen from ten to twelve times. Wages have risen from four to five times. The most careful calculation which sociologists and doctors can make, goes to show that, for a family of five, food alone ought to cost, for bare subsistence, 17 to 20 marks daily. That calculation includes neither meat nor butter, neither tea nor coffee. Add a matter of 5 marks for other needs (heat, light, clothes, rent) and one reaches a total of 25 marks for daily needs. The unskilled laborer in the towns earns at most 15 marks. It is only the most highly paid individuals in the most skilled trades who ever reach this subsistence minimum of 25 marks. The unemployed may buy bread, potatoes, and fuel with their daily dole of 5 marks for a maximum family but that is all that they can buy. A temporary condition, you will say? But some of the factories are destroyed, as much by Russians as by Germans. Week by week returning prisoners, deportees, and seasonal workers pour back from Russia and from Germany. They crowd together in any available shelter, dirty, unclad, half-fed, and typhus takes its toll. Their numbers will add hundreds of thousands yet to the total of the unemployed.

There is in "Congress" Poland itself nearly enough food to go round, if the administration were strong enough to deal with the hoarder and



the profiteer. Across the River Bug the starving country begins and stretches eastwards till it melts into the misery of Russia. There the barrier reels with hunger. This eastern zone, which is the barrier against Russia, is not even Polish. The Polish minority is a fraction. The town population is chiefly Jewish, the peasants Ukrainians, or "White" Russians. The Polish garrison has no illusions about the attitude of these races. To secure itself against a hostile population, it has no expedient but force.

The real Poland, the true Pole will tell you, is neither in the Borderland nor yet in the towns. The peasants are the Polish nation. I have been in the villages, and though they have a bare sufficiency of coarse food, their discontent is even more active than that of the townsmen. Nowhere in many wanderings, not even in Turkey or the West of Ireland, have I seen farm laborers living in such misery. By unspeakable roads, mere tracks of mud or sand, one approaches the manor-house, in which the whole civilization of the country-side is concentrated. Here alone is there comfort and wealth. One finds in the stables blood horses and pedigree cattle housed with every attention to hygiene. It has not occurred as yet to the Polish aristocrat to reckon his laborers' cottages among the amenities of his estate. These cottages, in the relatively prosperous district which I visited (Vloclawek), were all built upon the same plan, on estate after estate. A low and

often dilapidated square cottage is divided into four rooms. In each of these rooms an entire family, which may number from four to nine persons, is housed. The rooms are squalid, the furniture scanty, the bedding thin and dirty. The floor is usually of beaten clay. The ground round the houses is something between a morass and a dung heap, and the pig sleeps with the family at night, for fear of robbers. Sanitation there is none. The money wages may reach the magnificent sum of 80 marks a year—which in these days would buy two shirts.

There is, of course, in addition some payment in kind—grain, potatoes, and pasturage for a cow—but there is also the obligation to find or to hire a youth as assistant laborer.<sup>1</sup> It rarely happens in these days that the milk or butter from that cow can be spared for the laborer's children. The case of the peasant who owns a small but insufficient holding is in some ways rather worse. He

<sup>1</sup> In this primitive system of labor definitely servile conditions survive. The landlord considers, when he hires and houses a laborer, that he has a right to the services of his whole family. If the laborer has no child of working age, he is expected to hire a youth, boy or girl, as assistant (*posylka*). He must himself feed and house this *posylka*, and this youth must sleep with the married couple in their one room. The rate at which the laborer hires the *posylka* is much higher than the wage which the landlord pays on his account. I reckoned, after full inquiry, that the laborer has often a deficit of 100 marks a year on account of the wages of the *posylka*, without reckoning his keep. He balances this loss only by selling all the produce of his cow.

goes out as a day-laborer at  $1\frac{1}{2}$  marks a day, and there is no extra payment in kind for him. The peasant with a dwarf-holding is even more easily exploited than his landless brother, for he is tied to his plot of ground.

The explanation of these conditions is simple. Poland is over-populated, and in spite of the immense seasonal migration in normal times to Germany, and the permanent emigration to both Americas, the landlord has always had a teeming labor-market at his command. In the last year of peace no less than 358,000 migratory laborers went to Germany for the agricultural season, and 52,000 to other countries. Exclusive of the Jews, 174,000 Poles emigrated in the same year to the United States. One must also reckon the miners, who worked in the Westphalian and Belgian coal-pits, and the emigrants who went to South America. In the near future most of these outlets will be closed, for the Polish State has forbidden the migration of contract laborers to Germany, while the United States proposes to stop emigration for four years. The exodus to France will be encouraged, but it will not balance the closing of other fields for this immense export of labor. A considerable development of industry would absorb some of this surplus labor, but neither the capital nor the technical skill for any great extension of manufacture exists in Poland: this solution, if it is available, will be gradual and slow. An improvement in the methods of agriculture

would go far to employ this floating population. Cultivation in Poland is still very primitive: it is reckoned that whereas in Silesia sixty days of labor in the year are required to cultivate an acre, in Galicia the average is only forty days. Better farming, on that showing, might employ three men, where two suffice to-day. But, undoubtedly, the tendency will be to seek a solution in the colonization of the non-Polish Eastern Borderland with Polish settlers. It is commonly said that this country is sparsely peopled, but on the other hand the soil is sandy and there is much marsh and forest. From this area also laborers used to migrate and emigrate. A considerable portion of the population fled into Russia during the war, and its rights deserve prior consideration. Assuredly the native population will not welcome Polish settlers. On the other hand, the Polish landed class has every interest in diverting the land-hunger of their own peasants to this region, for they hope in this way to weaken the demand for the partition of their own estates by satisfying it at the expense of proprietors in the East. The Imperialism of the Poles, who claim all these non-Polish lands, which once were subject to their historic Kingdom, is more than an antiquarian sentimentalism. It has its real root in the pressure of population in overcrowded Poland. Its satisfaction would delay agrarian reform in Poland, and make in the Borderland itself a bitter racial war.

The countryside has been in ferment since the

Germans marched away last November. Organized by the Peasants' Party (Populists), a vigorous radical class-organization, the rural workers, small-holders and landless laborers alike, have acted boldly and acted together. At first they concentrated on a demand for a "war bonus"—a lump sum usually fixed at 300 marks (£6 at the present exchange) which would bring them some small share of the landowner's wartime prosperity, and enable them to buy a few clothes or boots. Many of them received a fraction of what they asked. Then came a whole series of more constructive demands, for a 600 mark yearly money wage, for two-room cottages, for the abolition of the hired assistant system, for free schools and free medical attendance. Strikes have been continuous all over the country, but since the strikers could rarely bring themselves to neglect the landlord's cattle, a strike in winter meant little. The real struggle will begin next month (April). That is only the foreground of the agrarian question in Poland. Behind these urgent demands there is the far more formidable agitation for the partition of big estates. Everywhere in eastern Europe the feudal system is crumbling. The Polish peasants are no more Bolsheviki than were the Land Leaguers who followed Davitt and Parnell, but they are no less in earnest. They are intensely Catholic. Their tradition of loyalty, not to say servility, to masters seemed unshakable. But this winter the laborer who on Monday bowed almost



to the ground as he doffed his cap to his master, was on some estates capable on Tuesday of locking his master up, until he accepted the new charter of rights. The two Peasant groups in the Diet propose, with the support of the Socialists, to break up all estates for subdivision among the landless laborers and the owners of uneconomic holdings. They would leave to the landlord no more than 200 or 150 morgen (100 or 75 acres), which they regard as the maximum which any one owner should be allowed to possess. Beside this main demand they ask also for the division of Church and State lands and of the confiscated Russian estates. The various landowners' parties are ready for one degree of compromise or another, but none of them will concede what is likely to satisfy the peasants. The struggle will be acute, but the peasants will win.

In this rapid inventory of the human contents of the Polish barrier, space fails me for details, but I cannot omit the Jews. It is, I am afraid, no exaggeration to say that the whole of Polish society in all classes is now deeply impregnated with anti-Semitism. More serious by far than the pogroms, is the daily round of insult and violence and the denial of economic opportunity which the Jews must endure. The Jews are 14 per cent. of the population of "Congress" Poland, and outside it, if "historical" Poland is to form the new State, the proportion is much higher. The for-

cible assimilation of this immense alien mass is grotesquely impossible. The liberalism which will recognize its reasonable claim for its own self-governing schools, and translate the present legal equality into a real equality, finds but a feeble expression in the political world.

The unique feature of Polish politics is, indeed, that in all its many groups there is none which calls itself, and none which deserves to be called, liberal. The little middle-class group failed to return a single member, and plainly it has no future. The "National Democrats," subsidized by the landowners, thrive by anti-Semitism and Chauvinism. The Socialists are of the right wing, opportunist, inclined to nationalism, and withal few in numbers. The Peasants' Party (Populists) is a class agrarian organization. The few "intellectuals" who belong to it are idealists, but their influence is limited. This party, by far the most interesting and characteristic group in Polish politics, has to its credit a great work for education, even in the days of Russian rule. Its propagandists (like those of the Socialist Party) struggled, with the Tsar's secret police ever on their track, to keep alive the flame of nationality, to teach something of Polish history, to educate the illiterate peasantry, and to promote the agrarian Co-operative Movement. Generous and romantic, these patriots had often to face Siberia, and none of them would have risked this life of devotion, unless they had had

something of the knight errant in their blood. One of these ladies, now a deputy, used to teach Polish history in the girls' schools of Warsaw, but the subject was forbidden, and the lesson was given under the disguise of a course in dressmaking. These pioneers, most of them at one time Socialists, are now engaged in educating the party, which is represented in the Diet by genuine horny-handed peasants, who wear their national dress. Five days a week these peasant deputies attend lectures on history, literature, and economics in their club. All that is good and much that is evil in Poland seems to have its root in romance. Yesterday this secret conspirators' struggle with Tsardom: to-day the four wars for the historic frontier.

I will conclude my inventory with the Bolsheviks, or Communists, as they are called here. They manage to elect about one-third of the delegates of the Workers' Councils. In spite of the preventive arrest of most of their leaders, and the suppression of their newspapers, their numbers certainly grow among the unemployed. In Warsaw, where certain Trade Unions are definitely Communist, and others Socialist, Catholic, or Jewish, the unemployed belonging to the Communist group were in February one in five in relation to the total number. As yet, however, their efforts are shattered on the solid patriotism of the Polish workers. Their attempt to organize a two days' demonstration strike a fortnight ago, at a

moment of grave military danger, was a failure, save in two advanced districts. None the less they have their crucial importance. They serve the Polish reaction as an invaluable bogey. Every day the State is in dire peril. Every day the clamor for fresh measures of repression grows louder. Every day the Diet listens to detailed stories of the excesses of the armed gendarmerie (formed on the Russian tradition), and after listening, it votes for further restrictions and severities. The reaction is striking behind the Communists at the whole working-class movement.

When I walk about in the slums of Warsaw and Lodz, watch the bread queues, glance at the crowded one-room dwellings from which all but the last sticks of furniture are gone, when I see the pinched and listless children, or study statistics of the almost vanished birth-rate, and the death-rate swollen by typhus, I marvel that Poland is not revolutionary. There are several reasons. It is intensely Catholic. Again, it has not learned by active war how easy it is to kill.<sup>1</sup> Bol-

<sup>1</sup> In a Polish country town, shortly after the departure of the Germans, the local militia caught a group of smugglers with a rich booty. Shortly after, it allowed them to escape. "But you had rifles," their superiors objected; "Why did you not shoot?" "Would you have us kill men for a bale of smuggled goods?" was the answer. In Frankfurt this spring, the authorities tried to arrest a woman in the market-place for selling illicit lottery tickets. Her clients resisted, and presently began to shoot. The shooting spread all over the town, and lasted for two or three days until it came at length to machine guns. The Germans have acquired the habit of killing. Even the Poles are learning it now.

shevism to the average Pole appears only as a new phase of the familiar Russian peril. Three years ago the Russians quitted Poland, as Poles intend, for ever. Once more they threaten her borders, and simple Poles think of Trotsky and his Red Army only as the successors of the Tsar and his Cossacks. Bolshevism is not merely a foreign doctrine, it is a Russian doctrine, and it comes with arms in its hands. Amid its manifold perils the tribal instinct that unites the Polish race is stronger by far than the class instinct that divides. But, above all, Poland hopes. Russia, Germany, Hungary were gripped by despair. Poland has risen from the tomb, and beyond the trials of to-day it sees a glorious resurrection. But the resurrection of what? If the barrier is put to an early test, with its defenseless frontiers, its unclad army, its hunger zone beyond the Bug, its half-starved unemployed, its wronged peasants wakening from the drugged sleep of centuries, its Jews the one hopeless element in these millions, is there a chance that the dikes will hold? If the perilous moment goes by, is the prospect better if Poland, ruling it may be, her three million annexed Germans, her five million unassimilated Jews, her hostile Lithuanian and Ukrainian subjects, consolidates herself under French instruction as a military power? How long, even with iron discipline, could such a state stand as a barrier, when at length the delayed wave broke from east or west?



Danzig is the symbol of the choice. If Danzig is annexed, it will be because the Allies have assigned to Poland this perilous military rôle. If Danzig remains a German city, and Poland secures only "those indisputably Polish populations" promised her in the Fourteen Points, her military rôle indeed is over, but her hope of peaceful evolution begins. Let the Allies pour in their food and their raw materials. Let them meet this scourge of hunger and unemployment by ample grants and loans of money. They cannot do too much for this stricken and infinitely patient people. To Poland they can give only one fatal gift—the means of embarking on an imperialist career. Let them bid her live on good terms with her neighbors, and seek her future rather as a link than as a barrier.<sup>1</sup> The barrier, if Allied strategists rely upon it, will crumble away at the first serious shock.

WARSAW, *March 30th.*

<sup>1</sup> Barrier, unhappily, it is to be. The Entente decided that in order to obtain access to the sea, Poland must annex a broad "corridor" leading to Danzig. That city, though it secures autonomy, comes also under Polish sovereignty. In order to make a broad, strategic corridor, some purely German towns and some predominantly German districts are included. A German minority (between two and three millions) will be subject to Polish conscription. East Prussia is left as an isolated German island. Plebiscites are to decide the future of Upper Silesia and of parts of East Prussia. That is well, but they are apt to be under Allied, not neutral supervision, and a strange provision requires the dissolution of the Workers' Councils in these areas. In any event, under present conditions, a vote for German citizenship is a vote to share in ruin. Even more indefensible is the decision to annex to Poland Eastern Galicia, with its Ukrainian population, and its desirable oil-wells.

## VIII

### AN IMPRESSION OF GERMANY

A TRAVELER who is trying to form an idea of the trend of thought in a strange country has several methods open to him. He may attend meetings and read newspapers and pamphlets with diligence. He may seek out the abler men and women in politics and probe them with questions. He may listen, silently if possible, to the voices of the street. I used all these methods during a three weeks' stay in Germany. In the end, after many interviews and much reading, I left off where I began. Entering Germany from Austria, and wandering with many stoppages for three days and nights over the inconceivably disorganized railways of Bavaria and Saxony, I had the chance of listening to the talk of dozens of fellow-travelers, who came and went in the crowded carriages. Two conversations stand out in my memory as typical. A group of Bavarian ladies from a little country town had been telling of the civil war, and the lack of food, and of their efforts to clothe themselves and feed their children. "It is far worse than the war," said one of them. "During the war we had hope. We knew it must end one

day. Now there is no hope." The other conversation began at Leipzig, in a carriage full of obviously well-to-do people, including a major and a colonel's wife. They discussed the forecasts of the coming peace from Paris, and for a long time what they said was conventional. No people could accept these terms and live: it was ruin, moral, political, and financial. It meant the end of Germany. Suddenly a handsome elderly man in the corner, a manufacturer as it turned out, intervened with something like this speech: "Well, you know, we set a very bad example. Don't forget what we did at Brest. The Entente is doing to us as we did to Russia. The real authors of this tragedy are Ludendorff and the Kaiser." I expected an angry protest. There was none. "That's true," came from two or three of the passengers. The soldier sat silent. The colonel's wife began to abuse the Crown Prince.

Up to the publication of the draft treaty these two conversations in the train would serve as a clue to German thinking. Two strands ran through it, a black abysmal hopelessness, and an almost morbid self-blame. Omitting the impenitent pan-German newspapers, whose influence is negligible, *Vorwärts* and the liberal *Berliner Tageblatt* had dropped the old attempts to minimize the responsibility of Germany's rulers for the war, and references to the contributory guilt of others were confined to qualifying phrases in parentheses. The condemnation of the violation

of Belgium, the devastation of the Somme, and the U-boat excesses was general, and manifestly sincere. There was a real effort to understand the attitude of the Entente in these matters. The official offer to raise a corps of volunteer laborers to repair the havoc in France and Belgium was more than a tactical move designed to facilitate the return of the prisoners of war. German opinion is ashamed of Ludendorff's performances, and wishes not only to separate itself from them, but even to do penance for them.

My last impression of Berlin was of a city visibly hesitating between the old world and the new. The Majority Socialists had summoned a meeting of protest against a Peace of Violence. In the vast Königsplatz and on the steps of the Reichstag a crowd had assembled which would fill Trafalgar Square three times over. The outer scene recalled the past. The ugly gilded figure of Victory was still poised on her pillar, and she glittered in the sun, as she has glittered on every day of spring since the "crowning mercy" of Sedan. Moltke turned his stone back to the crowd. The hideous wooden idol of Hindenburg lowered like some sullen African fetish above the more civilized vulgarities of Hohenzollern architecture. But there were red flags on the pedestal of Moltke's statue. On the platform of the colossal Hindenburg a frail little woman, one of the Socialist deputies, was making a glowing if somewhat sentimental speech, in which she predicted

the early triumph of the principle of love over the principles of violence and hate. On the steps of the Reichstag, an oldish man, with a marvelously clear voice, Herr Fischer, Socialist Deputy in the Reichstag, held the attention of at least 5,000 men and women. I could hardly believe my ears as he passed from the more conventional denunciations of this peace, which cuts deep into the living body of the German people, and condemns it to slavery for a generation, to a frank handling of the iniquities of the war. He told his audience that they must be prepared to pay, innocent though they might be, for Ludendorff's crimes. He denounced the violation of Belgium, without a syllable of excuse or reservation. When he came to speak of the devastation of the Somme area he spared no detail. He bade his hearers imagine the sensations of the French peasant as he returns to this desert, and dwelt on the deliberate malice which had ruined not only the houses but the fruit trees. He insisted that all this must be made good to the last pfennig, and told the crowd that if they did not like the prospect, they must blame Ludendorff and not the Allies. Fischer is no exceptional man, a trusted follower of Scheidemann. The resolution contained this remarkable sentence:

The German people is ready to do penance (*büssen*) for the sins of its former rulers, and to repair all the wrong that has been done.

That cannot have been an easy sentence to write



at a moment when the whole people is smarting under the sense that in this peace the Allies have surpassed in cold-blooded brutality the worst precedents of Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest.

English opinion is puzzled by the survival of certain compromised personalities in politics, but Herr Erzberger, for example, has to his credit a long and determined struggle against the U-boat campaign. The newspaper kiosques in Unter den Linden, in railway stations and even in hotels, displayed an infinite variety of pacifist pamphlets, which had a ready sale, while in the street hawkers were shouting every evening the title of a big pamphlet which explained "how our rulers lied us into the war." To this overwhelming current of opinion there was virtually no resistance. Among the Independent Socialists and the pacifists of long standing this tendency to put the whole blame for the war on the former rulers of Germany was so uncritical and so simple-minded, that few of them realized even faintly the menace of the Entente's imperialism. A fortnight ago Mr. Wilson's name was mentioned everywhere with veneration, and, stranger still, I met Germans who were startled and almost shocked because I did not share their admiration for Mr. Lloyd George. This mood visibly passed with the publication of the treaty. What Germans saw in it was above all a cold-blooded project for the destruction of a commercial competitor. The curious thing, however, about the comments on this

cruel document was that few of them (I except the *Vossische Zeitung*) were definitely anti-English. The moral drawn, even in clerical newspapers, and by the popular Center leader Giesberts, was that "capitalism" had in this treaty unmasked itself.

For the extinction of all hope and energy in the German people, the continuation of the blockade during the last seven months is chiefly to blame. At the moment when the hope, I will not say of victory, but even of a balanced, negotiated peace, vanished suddenly, there was just one chance for the sanity of an unhappy people. That chance was work. We denied it, not merely by withholding food (which began to arrive, but only in small quantities, in April), but even more by denying raw materials. The chief industries were at a standstill. Swedish ores were for the first time cut off by the blockade, and with them the iron of Lorraine. I saw the textile towns of Saxony, with their forests of mill chimneys that smoked no longer. If it was true of millions of workmen that they could not work, it was true of others that they would not.<sup>1</sup> The motive to work was absent. Wages were useless, for there was little to buy. Clothing was prohibitive in price. The

<sup>1</sup> Urgent official posters in all towns exhorted the urban unemployed to betake themselves to the plenty of the country. They did not go; as some said, because they would not; as others said, because the Junker landowners would take no workmen from the towns, infected as these were supposed to be with Communism.

stimulus of innocent pleasure was withdrawn. One cannot buy coffee or tea or tobacco (the best shops advertise a mixture containing 30 per cent.). There is practically no sugar or butter, and the jam is a nasty concoction of turnips. Why work, if wages will buy nothing? The unemployed allowance would just suffice to buy the inadequate rations of bread, meat, and potatoes. Since work was denied, the mind of the worker sought other interests. Some gambled—one sees them engaged in it at every street corner. More turned to politics. Restless, disillusioned, yet grasping at any new hope, they first expected that a government with a majority of Socialist Ministers would at least make a beginning in socializing industry. The Scheidemann Cabinet did nothing of the kind, nor has it, I believe, any intention of doing anything. It pleads financial difficulties, says this is a bad time to begin, deploys the obstructive prudence so natural to the “moderate.” It has gone so far in resisting proposals to “socialize” suitable industries, that even the liberal *Berliner Tageblatt* and *Frankfurter Zeitung* have begun to blame its inaction. As the workmen saw Parliament withdraw itself to Weimar, there to lose itself in interminable committee-work over the Constitution, they lost faith in the old parliamentary forms. The demand for some form of “Soviet” as a recognized part of the Constitution became irresistible. With some a mere fashion, with others a mode of expressing discontent, with

others again a real constructive idea, the Soviet had become a symbol of revolt. The crushing of Spartacus in no way weakened the movement. The only result of the demonstration that armed revolt is destined to defeat, has been to promote the strike. All the strikers, from the miners of the Ruhr to the bank clerks of Berlin, put forward political demands, and all of them based themselves on the Soviet idea. The strikes were in fact a far more deadly form of social disintegration than the fighting. They end only to begin again after an interval for recuperation. The Ruhr miners, for example, have worked for barely half the period from November to May, and the last week of April the output of coal had fallen in Germany generally to 1 per cent. of the normal quantity. The effect on the railways and on industry can be imagined. Capital values are being ruined steadily. At every big station one sees queues of dilapidated locomotives which cannot be repaired. Some of the coal-mines are hopelessly flooded. Machinery is everywhere being ruined for want of lubricating oil. For years the science and energy of this race fought the consequences of the blockade. I found myself continually marveling at the ingenuity which could make dress materials, bath towels, and string from woven paper, and replace the pneumatic tires of bicycles and cars with noisy but comfortable substitutes of steel springs. To-day one feels that the struggle has been abandoned; the tough will has



been broken. The motive power of hope has failed.

The problem of to-day, with or without help and understanding from the West, is to re-create hope. It is partly a physical problem. A doctor would prescribe a rest-cure, with abundant and stimulating food, for the whole nation. It is not merely half-starved: it is in a state of nervous ill-health, that varies according to temperament from dull apathy to neurotic over-excitement. No one is surprised to hear of the physical consequences of nearly five years' progressive under-feeding. The children are sickly and stunted: tuberculosis rages: the old die off at the first touch of disease: the birth-rate falls in some towns and in some classes to near vanishing point: the death-rate rises: the average man and woman in the streets is visibly listless and anemic: the sturdiest workman is incapable of his former efforts and his habitual endurance. These things can be measured and proved by statistics. The more elusive nervous consequences of malnutrition are no less obvious, when one has seen these defeated peoples in the mass at public meetings or in street demonstrations. The discipline of North Germany, the geniality of South Germany are no longer characteristic. Thinking is active, feverish, and destructive. Berlin seems as deeply interested in a novel political theory as London is in a painted "flapper" or the Atlantic flight. The whole current of political thought is "to the Left," and the party



leader dreads only that his followers should desert him for a less moderate competitor. I found myself at first inclined to treat the recklessness of this political speculation as a verbal extravagance. I changed my mind after I had seen unarmed crowds in Vienna facing rifle-fire with a barely sane contempt of death, and risking their lives to pick up a little coal or to cut a fallen horse into butcher-meat. I changed it even more after I had watched the ascendancy over the Berlin Workers' "Soviet" of Communist speakers, whose tones and gestures at once betrayed a neurotic condition. Years of poverty and semi-starvation have sapped the morals of the blockaded peoples. An elaborate social structure has fallen into decay, like a farm which returns to the wilderness when cultivation ceases. The once incorruptible civil service of Germany, with its tremendous pride in the ethics of the official caste, is no longer proof against bribes. Theft and even robbery have become frequent, as they were not in the old days, and one heard of girls who would sell themselves for a cake of soap. We are pleased to talk of Huns, but when history tells the whole story of the working of this blockade from the Urals to the Rhine, in the hospitals that lack drugs, linen, and anesthetics, in the garrets where dying children call to unemployed fathers, in the streets where desperate mobs pillage under the fire of brutalized troops, the next generation will ask with probing curiosity what devastation it was that Attila

wrought to compare with this achievement of ours.

Even if the blockade were lifted to-morrow, if food were poured in, and credits granted to restart industry, I doubt whether German politics would then begin to enter a normal path. The sounder a people is, and the more its health recovers, the more will it seek to open some door of hope. The crime of this treaty is that it kills hope. Every one in Germany had hope for an end of wars: but there will be no rest, if these annexations to Poland are maintained. Every one had built on the League of Nations: it is at best a disappointing structure, and from it Germany is excluded. To unite with Austria would have been some compensation for the loss of Alsace and Posen, which every one knew to be just: that also is excluded. All this, however, is trifling, compared with the economic ruin that faces Germany. To lose every trading center, and footing, and facility in China, Africa, Turkey, Russia; to lose the entire mercantile fleet, to be denied reciprocal rights in tariffs, transport, foreign residence; to see no prospects of obtaining raw materials on equal terms—all this means, to say nothing of the humiliation, a return to the economic conditions of the middle of last century. With no means of restoring her foreign trade, Germany must somehow maintain a population which can live only by foreign trade. Apart altogether from the indemnity, that prospect means ruin in the most literal sense. It means that for some fifteen millions of

the population it will be impossible by exchange to purchase the necessary food from abroad.<sup>1</sup>

Of the indemnity I will say nothing: it cannot under these conditions be paid. One may ruin Germany, if one so pleases. One might exact, after a couple of years for recuperation, a reasonable contribution for reparation. One cannot do both. How will the future shape under this treaty? Will it, in the first place, be signed? The odds are that, sooner or later (probably sooner), it will be signed. There lives no single German who would sign it, save under the dread of literal starvation. I believe that the Democratic Party, roused by Theodor Wolff of the *Tageblatt*, is sincere in its refusal to sign, and, unless there are large modifications, its members will leave the Cabinet rather than sign. This party has no working-class electors: the middle class can always buy some food. The Majority Socialists and the Catholic Center are both divided, but both on the whole incline to sign in the last resort under protest, for their working-class followers (including the Center's Catholic women voters) would not pardon leaders who condemned them to starvation. The Independents are almost alone in say-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hoover has predicted that ten or twelve million Germans will be forced to emigrate. Whither? North America is closed. The Argentine is legally open, and Russia one day will be open. But shall we tolerate a German "penetration" of Russia? Will the ghost of President Monroe allow Latin-America to be Germanized.

ing openly that there is no alternative to signature; but they are too shrewd to relieve the present Ministry of the responsibility. Some change of persons is probable, both in the Cabinet and in the delegation at Versailles, before the treaty is signed.<sup>1</sup> In any event the moral value of this signature will be less than nothing, for it will mean only that in the present condition of anemia half the nation lacks the heroism to starve. The act, whether of signing or not signing, will be fatal to the present Coalition. Their prestige at present is very low. If they sign, it will be lower still. If they should refuse to sign, the starving masses would wholly desert them.

I doubt whether as yet any single tendency is strong enough to dominate Germany after the hour of humiliation, and to hew out a road of hope. Parliament is flat, dull, and remote, and its ranks poor in notable personalities. There may be an attempt to form an all-Socialist Cabinet, but it could not secure unity. It must on the one hand omit the most compromised "Right" Socialists, especially the detested Noske. On the other hand,

<sup>1</sup> These forecasts proved correct. The Democrats (Liberals) dropped out of the Ministry, and so did Scheidemann, with two or three others. The leading personalities are now Erzberger, Noske (who will probably ruin his colleagues), and the Foreign Minister, Hermann Müller, a moderate Majority Socialist, who retained his popularity with all sections during these years of bitter feud, and is a man of transparent honesty and much good sense.



neither the Communist leaders nor even such "Left" Independents as Däumig are likely to join it, because they believe in a pure Soviet administration. Even if the more moderate Independents (Haase, Oskar Cohn, Kautsky, Breitscheid) and the "Left" Majority (Wissel, Kaliski, Cohen-Reuss) were to form a government without a majority, but with the tacit consent of the Assembly, it would be wrecked before long by the revolutionary tactics of the Extreme Left. The Left leaders have learned by recent events that armed insurrection is doomed to failure, but they intend to continue the policy of strikes. The Communist leaders whom I saw impressed me as nervous wrecks. Behind them is an army of desperate men, the war-cripples, the unemployed, the unemployable. In the general mood of despair the future belongs to the most reckless group. No one has much to lose, and even for the propertied class property has lost its value if trade is out of the question and the workers will not work. The Versailles plan of exploiting Germany for a generation omits all reckoning with human nature. As the *Nation* put it, men are not bees who will go on working if all the honey is taken periodically from the hive.

Sane men were absorbed in one problem only—how to induce the workers to work again. Without some hope in the future it cannot be solved. Expedients for creating hope are many and contradictory. The old military party dreams, of



course, of a *revanche* in the old style, and Leagues of Officers discuss the possibility of an air war, and play with schemes of a more or less secret militia. Their public as yet is small, and the general sense condemns this reversion to the past. The next war will not be a shock of Powers, dynasties, and diplomatic coalitions: it will be an economic struggle with the class war raging beneath it. There is much talk of an alliance with Soviet Russia, and some Pan-Germans, notably Professor Elzbacher, advised the adoption of Bolshevism *en bloc*. That seemed a trifle sudden, for all Berlin was still covered with ugly official posters depicting Bolshevism as a vampire. The real Communists refused to coquet with this faction. A curious "Continental" movement, with Bloch, Kaliski, and Cohen-Reuss as its leaders, has some footing among the Left Socialist majority. It believes in an understanding with France and Russia to break the Anglo-American economic ascendancy. The idea of any understanding with France seems fantastic. The "Continentalists" justify their expectation on the ground that France and Germany are both crippled by the war: there must be a fraternity in suffering: the lame man must help the paralytic. They seem to forget that these two nations crippled each other: moreover, France has this compensation, that her Allies seem content to allow her a revival of her ancient military ascendancy in Europe. Though there are many difficulties in arranging an economic understand-

ing with Russia across the barrier of Poland (whose railways may not welcome German through traffic), this half of the policy is clearly sound. None the less, though there are brilliant men (notably Julius Kaliski) in this circle, I doubt if it is more as yet than a group of literary *frondeurs*. The orthodox Socialist position, to which the Independents give the most confident expression, is, of course, that this treaty, as cruel as the Peace of Brest, will last no longer. They foresee an early change of opinion, perhaps a revolutionary change, in France and Britain, and predict that the International will insist on the revision of the treaty. That may be the one sane hope, but no one who has watched English opinion this week will be disposed to expect much in the way of action at a very early date. There may be a disposition to admit Germany to the League of Nations after two years. The disturbing question is what will happen during the period of waiting. In any event, could a League of Nations, tied by its present Constitution, ever force Poland to disgorge her unjustifiable acquisitions?

I cannot believe myself that this faint hope, fed with a few perfunctory resolutions from London and Paris, will have life enough in it to induce the German worker to desert the leadership of the Extremists. The two real forces in Germany to-day are the new volunteer army on the one hand and the revolutionary workers on the other—the machine gun and the strike. This new Pretorian

Guard, raised by Noske to crush Spartacus, numbers about 450,000 men. A large proportion even in the ranks are ex-officers or university students, and the inducement to join it is chiefly abundant food, good clothes, and high pay. The signature of the treaty will require the disbandment of three-fourths of this new force, and the relics of the old army (about 300,000 men). The immediate future might depend on the accident whether a civilian Ministry chooses the Corps which are to survive, or whether an enterprising Corps chooses the Ministry. A powerful caste is about to be ruined, and the disbanded men and officers will be potentially revolutionary material. That Germany in its present condition can be policed by an army, however efficient, which numbers only 100,000 men, seems to me improbable. If Noske or a successor attempts to do with 100,000 men what he has done, none too easily, with 700,000, he will assuredly fail. On the other hand, the adoption of a conciliatory social policy would probably come too late. The popular expedient is to attempt a compromise with the Soviet system, on something like English Guild Socialist lines—a two-chamber Parliament, one House on the present territorial plan, and the other on a basis of industrial representation. That would be at the best an unstable compromise, and the Left Socialist Wing would go on fighting for “the real thing,” the dictatorship of the proletariat. The treaty is triple nonsense. It expects Germany to

earn vast sums, and to earn them without the right and facility to trade abroad. It expects some government to impose this servitude on the German workers, yet denies to that government the army which alone might hold them down in outward obedience. It robs fifteen million Germans of subsistence, and omits to provide them with a field for emigration.

I am inclined to risk a prediction of the consequences of enforcing this treaty. They will not be interesting or eventful. For months to come Germany may be forgotten. She lacks the energy or the unity to act, though spasmodic essays, at positive action in opposite directions, may be attempted. The chief consequences will be negative. The workers will not work, or in so far as they work, it will be fitfully, half-heartedly, like angry, weary, and helpless men. So far from resenting this attitude, the middle-class employees will largely share it. Already the lines of class cleavage between the hand-worker and miserably sweated brain-worker have almost disappeared. This "ca' canny" mood will affect the employers no less than the men. The natural tendency to repair machinery and restart trade will be checked at every turn by the knowledge that between the burden of internal taxation<sup>1</sup> amounting to more

<sup>1</sup> The whole burden of internal taxation in Germany for the coming financial year (1919-20), excluding the indemnities altogether, is according to the new Finance Minister, Herr Erzberger, 25 milliard marks. Herr Wassermann, a director of the Deutsche Bank, kindly showed me his calculations under-



than half the national income, and the load of the foreign tribute, all chance of appreciable profits has disappeared. Banks will refuse credit, for until the first two years are over no one will know what Germany's liabilities really are, nor until she is admitted to the League will her chance of trade be worth estimating. The ruin will go on unchecked, and the irresistible conviction will grow that the only chance of restarting life lies in repudiating debts, or in socializing without compensation. The Entente, in short, by this treaty, is reducing Germany to a despair as deep as Russia's. In the long run, the only possible field for German energy is Russia, and whether Lenin rules or Kolchak, no force can ultimately keep the German population from carrying its skill and science to the mental desert of the East. In the end, the two peoples whom the West has wronged, will seek their *revanche* together. But for a vivid, angry, resourceful, positive movement of protest and resistance, one need not look to-morrow. That in the end would be better for the world, for courage may do much to glorify ruin. Lethargy, despair, decay, the decline of an elaborate civilization, the slow lapse into disrepair of a good machine, that will be the immediate consequence of this treaty that murders hope. The German na-

taken to estimate the total income of the nation for the past year. Including all taxable income, allowing for incomes below the level of taxation and adding a margin for concealment and evasion, he reached a total national income of 48 milliard marks.



tion will wear itself out in abortive motions of unrest. It will flounder: it will sulk: it will decay. Injure us it cannot, save by its sickness, but this corpse is big enough to poison Europe.

LONDON, *May 20th.*

## IX

### THE SOVIET IDEA IN GERMANY

Two sights arrested my attention during a first walk in the central streets of Berlin towards the end of April. The public buildings in Unter den Linden and the Wilhelmstrasse were still covered with the pock-marks of rifle- and machine-gun fire. The city had gone through the smallpox of revolution, and survived with scars. Rather more interesting than the bullet-marks was a conspicuous printed notice which still adorned the Opera House, the University, and some of the buildings where the Ministers were housed. "Under the Protection," it ran, "of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council of Berlin." Germany is a Parliamentary Republic of the conventional pattern, with its President, and its responsible Cabinet of Ministers, its Parliament elected by universal suffrage, its States built on a similar pattern, while its cities have their orthodox elected Municipal Councils. It had still its small and highly efficient army, the pick of the youth of the old war-machine, and at the doors of these very buildings the sentries paced up and down, sturdy young men in smart "field-gray" uniforms with shapely steel helmets on their heads and hand-grenades in their

belts. Yet in spite of Ministers and Parliaments and well-paid volunteer sentries, it was still worth while to remind any insurgent warriors who might have been tempted to assail these buildings that they were under the protection of the Berlin Workers' Council. These Councils, constructed on the plan of the Russian Soviets, have as yet no assured place in the Draft Constitution. They are simply committees elected by the workmen of Berlin, and yet, as these notices suggested, they have some moral power which a legal government, backed as the Ebert-Scheidemann régime was, by horse and foot, by guns and grenades, did not disdain to call to its aid.

Hard by the first of these notices which caught my eye was a placard announcing a lecture. It was a striking bill, and I saw it again and again as I wandered about Berlin. Like the "protection" notice, it became for me a symbol of the contemporary Germany. It announced that at one of an important series of meetings organized by the Democratic Party (i.e. the middle-class Liberals), a well-known Professor would lecture on the theme "Why has Weimar caused disillusionment?" The choice of the subject and the wording of the title were significant. Weimar, where the National Assembly meets, is, of course, the symbol for democracy of the conventional Western Parliamentary type. The pathos of this lecture lay in the fact that for three generations the political groups of which the Democratic Party is

the heir, have preached representative Democracy as the one thing needful. Others, the Socialists, for example, have preached it, as a necessary ingredient in something else, or a necessary stepping-stone to a happier shore, but for the Democrats democracy was enough. One may reproach them with infidelities and weaknesses, lapses into Imperialism, and occasionally, though rarely, with a passing sycophantic moment towards royalty, but they and their forefathers, from 1848 downwards, had certainly stood for Parliamentary government, and for most of them England had been the model. The Revolution of November had fulfilled their wildest dreams. It had brought not merely democracy but republican democracy. No opposition from the Right dared any longer raise its head, and it only remained to discuss the details, and to work out the plan of the most enlightened constitution in Europe. For a generation most of these men had dreamed, not indeed of this complete fulfilment of their hopes, but of some slow and distant approach to it. A year ago even the reform of the Prussian franchise had seemed a slightly precarious hope, and now everything had come at once—responsible government, women's suffrage, proportional representation, the democratization of Prussia, and the disappearance not merely of the Hohenzollerns but of the whole brood of princely families. A working saddler was President of the German Reich and a former compositor dictated policy in Bismarck's

old Chancelry. The Democrats, elderly or middle-aged gentlemen of a slow digestion, would have liked to sit down to a lengthy process of rumination, to survey their realized ideal and find it good. They had to recognize, however, that contemporary Germany took only the faintest interest in this dream of constitutional perfection. The masses were thinking of anything and everything else, and already a formidable and growing Left Wing talked as though the perfect model of Parliamentary democracy were a thing intellectually as obsolete as the Junker ascendancy, and as remote from the real life of the people as the monarchy itself. Of Weimar and the Assembly few troubled even to talk, and those few, for the most part, with impatience. All over Germany the Left was setting up ephemeral Soviet Governments, and when Comrade Noske's "Free Corps" had upset them, with a maximum of bloodshed, it wanted only a fresh epidemic of strikes to prove that nothing in reality was settled. Instead of sitting down to celebrate the triumph of Parliamentary democracy, the unhappy Democrats were reduced to offering apologies for Weimar. They were frank enough to recognize that Germany had lost an illusion.

For the contempt in which Weimar was rather generally held there were some accidental and temporary reasons. It was generally said of William II that he had destroyed the monarchy for ever by his inglorious flight. The removal of



the National Assembly from its natural seat in the Capital to the provincial calm of Weimar had a like effect. It was an act of cowardice, a retreat before the passionately discontented masses of Berlin. In the second place, Weimar had to assume responsibility for the government of Germany in an hour of universal *malaise*. It was free, indeed, of responsibility for the catastrophic defeat for which Kaiserdom, the Junkers, and the Pan-Germans bore the blame. The real cause of the social misery, the hunger, the cold, the unemployment of the terrible winter that followed the armistice, was the continued Allied Blockade, maintained with completer rigidity than ever, in the matter of food, up till the month of April, while as regards raw materials it was never for a moment relaxed. No one could fairly blame Weimar for the blockade—though, to be sure, I have heard Left-Wing Socialists argue (absurdly, in my opinion) that the whole attitude of the Allies would have been gentler, if persons less compromised than Scheidemann and his colleagues had sat at the council-table. Certainly Weimar was blamed for the inadequacy of its remedial measures, and for the savagery with which the Spartacus revolt was suppressed. Few peoples are just to their governments at such times, and Weimar became associated with hunger, revolt, and distress. The worst of all was that the Assembly took its functions as a constituent body with enormous seriousness. It set to work

at once, and worked with German thoroughness at the task of elaborating the Constitution. As luck would have it, what Germany in this dark winter needed was not the ideal democratic Constitution, but some interim solutions of social problems which would give confidence to the workers and ease the difficult task of persuading them to work and think constructively. Those who had voted for the Socialist lists saw with satisfaction a Socialist President and a Socialist Premier at the head of the State, but nothing was socialized, not even the coal-mines. They had expected some immediate result from their votes, but nothing happened that touched their daily lives. In some degree the very perfection of the democratic machine was to blame. The Proportional system had given to every group its exact share of representation but it returned no one party in numbers sufficient to form a homogeneous administration. Under a simple majority vote with single-member constituencies the Parties of the Right instead of securing 15 per cent. of the representation would probably have disappeared and the two Socialist parties would have had numbers enough (if they could have composed their feud) to form a purely Socialist Government with an adequate majority. Finally, Weimar was a disappointment, because the German people, when it made its revolution, expected that a democratic Germany would receive better treatment from the Allies than the old "autocracy" would have done. That had been the

burden of speeches in which Mr. Wilson and Mr. Lloyd George had held out this hope in plainer words than statesmen often use. As the months went by, that expectation vanished, and Germans understood that their democratic Republic was to be a pariah and a helot in Europe. As the news of one scheme after another, of annexation and economic enslavements, reached them from Paris, the task of making a Constitution for a vanishing fatherland began to look vainer than ever. I happened to be talking to Professor Preuss, the Minister charged with drafting the Constitution, when the first summary of the Peace Terms arrived. "We had nearly finished our building plan," was his comment, "but you are destroying our site."

Enough of faith and optimism was left even in this defeated and despondent nation to seek out an alternative to the older democratic form which had disappointed it. An ever-widening circle saw in the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, based on the Russian Soviet model, the future structure of representation in Germany. The reasons which have made this tendency a stream too strong to be resisted are as various as the reasons which discredited Weimar. The Extreme Left, of course, saw in these Councils the apt instruments of the coming social revolution. Without that motive it is doubtful whether they would ever have been created. With some disguises the Left built them up for this purpose, and whenever the Revolution

triumphed, whether in reckless Munich or sober Hanover, the Councils were ready to direct it. The curious fact was that although this intention was barely disguised by the Left, the more moderate parties were obliged to fall into step. The Majority Socialists, or rather the inner directing ring of their powerful organization, were never really friendly to the Council idea. They are an essentially conservative force, like all disciplined political machines. They have a long past behind them, and their instinctive attitude towards every new idea is one of jealousy and hostility. In politics they believe in the old Parliamentary forms, and could not advance beyond the ideal for which they had battled for a generation. In industry, they believed in the Trade Unions as the organs of class struggle, and the Trade Union officials, who are as influential among them as they are in the British Labor Party, regarded the Councils as dangerous rivals to their own Unions. None the less, the Majority Socialists were carried by the public opinion of the working-class far beyond their own wishes in a recognition of the Councils, and busied themselves, not with open opposition, but with the invention of compromises which would give the Councils some place in the working-class movement compatible with the survival of Parliament and the Trade Unions. More interesting still was the attitude of the "black-coated" workmen, especially the clerks, who were at first considered as "bourgeois," and were left outside



these class organizations. One of the most startling results of the war and the blockade in Central Europe is that the wall of partition between the manual worker and the brain-worker has worn very thin. The clerk, the teacher, the civil servant, and the small professional man have been much less successful than the well-organized Trade Unionists in raising their nominal earnings, and as the value of money fell, they have often sunk to a level of poverty much below that of the artisan. The struggle to preserve appearances and to seem to be members of the master-class is maintained with much less than the old obstinacy. More and more these salaried employees have learned to think of themselves as proletarians. The Berlin clerk to-day votes for the Majority Socialists, or if he clings to a bourgeois party, his choice is the Democrats. So it happened that the bank clerks of Berlin made an obstinate strike (and won it) not merely for an increase of salary, but for the right to form their Council like other workmen, and to send their delegates to the Berlin Soviet. There are in that big and stormy body, by no means tolerant to minorities, a little group of "Democratic" (or as we should say "Liberal") representatives, who take their full part in debate with the Socialists, and prove their loyalty to the institution by their good humor in facing a noisy and far from sympathetic audience. While I was in Berlin, continual declarations of adhesion to some form of the Council idea were appearing in



the Press. One came from the veteran Liberal economist Professor Brentano, and another in the form of a lengthy, reasoned resolution was passed by the organization which represents the employers of Berlin. They obviously believed that the way out of revolutionary chaos lay in the friendly recognition of these Councils by the State, and the attribution to them of a real but limited sphere of influence.

The Left had its own clear and decided idea of the function and future of the Councils. It intended that they should remain a class organization in the broad meaning of that word. Every genuine worker, including the salaried employee and the professional man, should have a vote for them, but no employer, no *rentier*, none who lived by the toil of others. I heard a debate on the draft of a new formal Constitution in the Berlin Soviet during May. Some of the marginal cases were rather curious. The Left was quite ready, for example, to enfranchise doctors in ordinary practice, but it wanted to exclude doctors who made a living by keeping sanatoria in which they "exploit" the labor of junior doctors and nurses. The Right wished to include even the employer if he were himself active as manager and organizer; but in the Berlin Soviet, as it is to-day, the Left is dominant. The real driving forces of the movement, the extremer "Independents" like Däumig and Richard Müller, and, of course, the Communists, regarded Parliamentary institutions as obso-

lescent. They meant sooner or later to make Germany a "Räte-Republik"; in other words, to suppress the rival institutions, and to make the Räte (Councils) the sole legislative and executive authorities. Any compromise they regarded as purely transitional.

For the moment the idea of compromise has won. The one permanent result of the March general strike was that the Government promised to give the Workers' Councils a definite place in the German Constitution. As yet, the scheme agreed upon between the Scheidemann Cabinet and a delegation from the Berlin Soviet (in which at that time the Majority Socialists were leading) exists only in outline. It is a promise that the Constitution shall recognize, or set up (1) Works' Committees representing all workers and employees in every factory, mine, etc.; (2) Industrial Councils in every trade, of the "Whitley" type, to regulate the general conditions of production, representing both employers and workers; (3) Chambers of Work, representing employers, the professions, and the workers of all trades in definite territorial districts; and (4) a Chamber of Work for the whole German Realm, with a right of suggestion and consultation on all industrial and social-political legislation.

This "compromise" was a clever stroke on the part of the non-revolutionary majority, for in a subtle way it turns the weapon of the Left against itself. The intention is that the Chamber of Work,

and the local analogous bodies, shall represent employers and employed on a basis of parity. Thus, the pure class organization, the Workers' Council, is transformed into a body based on the equal rights of capital and labor. No one, so far as I know, has suggested the introduction of any disinterested or balancing element. I had an opportunity of discussing the scheme with Herr Julius Kaliski, the leader of the anti-official Opposition within the Majority Socialist Party, and one of the ablest thinkers in the Socialist movement. He regards the Government's offer merely as a first step. In his view, the Chamber of Work is destined to be a more important body in the Constitution than the Reichstag itself. He claims for it parallel legislative powers, even outside the field of industrial and social legislation. How, as he justly asks, can one divorce industrial policy from the foreign policy of the State, in a world where foreign policy turns continually on the struggle for markets and raw materials? He would provide for conflicts between the two Chambers by giving the Reichstag the right which the British Commons have against the Lords, to carry a Bill which it had passed three times, in spite of the veto of the Chamber of Work. When I suggested that a Chamber composed in equal parts of Workers and Employers would be an unmanageable body with no internal cohesion, and no single driving force, and no motive which could give unity of direction, he answered that the

Chamber of Work would represent the community as producer, and that the interests of production itself would give it unity. He assumed, in fact, that the desire to serve the community by producing in the best possible way is ultimately the dominant motive alike with employers and employed.

There is in this German compromise between the old forms of democracy with their basis in territorial representation and the new form with its basis in industry, a close parallel to the solution propounded, even before the war, by our British Guild Socialists. The Germans have, however, reached their compromise mechanically. They find the State and the old form of democracy in existence, and they make terms with it, but trouble themselves very little to assign it a suitable function. The Guild Socialist, on the other hand, does not merely tolerate or accept the "democratic" Parliament: he regards it as the necessary representation of citizens regarded as consumers. His structure is no mere compromise: it is a recognition of the fact that the same person will act and vote somewhat differently, according as he is organized as a consumer or producer. The German "Councils" movement, on the other hand, is thinking only of the worker as producer.

This interesting phase of social evolution in Germany was interrupted for a moment by the crisis over the Terms of Peace. The next few months will show whether it can be directed into the channels of a constitutional development. For

my part I am inclined to think that the class cleavage, sharpened intolerably by the miseries of war and the blockade, is too acute to admit of such compromises as the Government or even Herr Kaliski propose. The Independents and the Communists scoff at the idea of any Chamber of Work in which the employing class has equal representation with the workers. They are fanatically attached to the Council idea, not merely because it is a more supple and natural form of representation than the old territorial basis, but above all because it represents the worker to the exclusion of the capitalist. The compromise is not yet accepted, and the power of the Left is growing. The tactical value of the Workers' Council for the Left is, firstly, that it brings together all the workers, no longer sundered in crafts and divided in Trade Unions, as a single class with a solid interest against capital as a whole, and secondly that it can wield the weapon of the political strike. At bottom, it is, I believe, the acuteness of this class cleavage in Germany which explains the decay of Parliament. Parliament is neither a Workers' nor an Employers' Council, but a confused attempt to reflect the unity of a nation, where, in fact, unity no longer exists.

The compromise might, I think, stand a chance of success if at the start some of the chief industries were already nationalized. If, for example, the mines and the big metal concerns were represented among the employers on the Council,



not by profit-making companies, but by the democratic State as owner, then the two halves of the Chamber of Work would no longer reflect an unbridgable class cleavage. Under these conditions the Chamber of Work would tend to be a body specially charged with the duty of preparing the progressive socialization of industry and graduating the stages of public control over production. Evolution in the present condition of Germany can hope to cope with revolution only if it moves rapidly and visibly. The pace since November has been too slow, primarily because the makers of the Republic failed to realize that democracy is no longer for any living society an end in itself.

## X

### THE NEW MILITARISM

As I entered Germany through Bavaria, the Government troops, Noske's "Free Corps," were massing for the attack on Munich. One saw them at every station, vigorous young men in the twenties, many of them ex-officers. They had new uniforms. They looked clean and well fed. They bustled about the stations with a brisk air among the listless crowds. They drank wine in the buffets, and in the streets they walked about with girls. They seemed to dominate Germany with their steel helmets and their stick-grenades ready at their belts. I had arrived in time to witness the triumph of law and order. Noske with his 450,000 Volunteers was supreme. Work, to be sure, went no better for their victory. The unemployed still elected Communists to the Workers' Councils. After the Ruhr, the Silesian coal-pits struck. But Noske added victory to victory, and from Munich in due course came the news that the last stronghold of Spartacus had fallen.

I spent an evening some days later in a hospitable "Independent" Socialist house in Berlin. Among the guests were a banker, a count, and a certain Baron S. It was not exactly the company

that one expected to meet in a Marxist salon. Of the three, Baron S. interested me particularly. He was once connected with Krupps. His fame as a successful agent of German propaganda used to reach us in telegrams from Athens while King Constantine still reigned. To-day he occupies a post at the seat of power. He is attached in a political capacity to the Free Corps—Noske's anti-revolutionary guard. To me he seemed a man of unusual intelligence and decision. At the moment of Noske's apparent triumph, I was curious to hear how politics looked from the windows of the "Eden Hotel"—for Baron S. had his office in the headquarters of the Corps which murdered Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. The replies to my first questions were more than startling. The Corps knew that they had failed. They had started with all manner of boyish and soldierly illusions about the efficacy of force, but already they were weary of the unending work. They rushed to one great town, only to find that a general strike had broken out in another. So soon as one coalfield was "pacified," another "downed tools." With machine guns and hand grenades one can destroy a revolutionary Government, but one cannot force the workers to work. The end of it all will be Bolshevism, declared Baron S. vehemently; there is only one possible alternative. Here I invite the reader to pause, and recollect the speaker's antecedents. The alternative, if you please, was an all-Socialist Government. Noske

and Scheidemann must go. They were sham Socialists. The middle-class Ministers must all go. The workers would trust only a Government of Socialists, and work they will not, until they trust the Government. It must embody the Soviets in the Constitution, as a Second Chamber. It must instantly nationalize the mines and the big metal industries. There, perhaps, it might stop short. The workers would believe an all-Socialist Government, if it said that more for the moment was inexpedient. They would not believe a mixed Coalition which refused to nationalize; in that case they drew the conclusion that Erzberger and Dernburg had paralyzed their Socialist colleagues. "But," I asked in amazement, "would the Free Corps allow their creator Noske to be deposed; would they tolerate an all-Socialist Government?" The answer came promptly. "The leaders all agree: they accept my plan." So, then, the pillars of order no longer trust their own stability. They see the necessity at least of a moderate advance into Socialism, and even of a partial adoption of the Soviet system—they would cure Bolshevism by homœopathy. The banker was of the same opinion.

The sequel proves that Baron S. was probably too sanguine in his estimate of the intelligence of the leaders of the Free Corps. The fact was, I think, that the Corps were sharply divided by a feud which was at bottom rather personal and professional than political. Some weeks later,

at the Congress of the Majority Socialists, Noske accused the Independents of tampering with the loyalty of his Corps, and endeavoring to arrange a *coup d'état*. Nothing actually happened, either because the Independent leaders were too prudent to strike before the Treaty of Peace was signed, or because their wiser heads shrank from such questionable allies, perhaps because the Corps were not really in the salutary state of mind of the able and sympathetic Baron S., or else because Noske had offered them better terms.

This accidental glimpse of the under-world of intrigue in Berlin set me thinking. On this occasion the Free Corps had not in fact made a *coup d'état*, but if they had been so minded, what was there to stop them? That is not a question which one asks about Germany or any other civilized State in normal times. The officers of the army are usually men more or less satisfied with their professional careers and with their social relaxations and ambitions. If in a monarchical State they are discontented, their loyalty to the sovereign is usually a sufficient restraint. One does not inquire what would happen if they should abuse their monopoly of force, because (in England, for example) the motive which might induce them to abuse it is absent. They are ordinary members of the governing class, and though they commonly belong to its more Conservative Right Wing, and are critical of any "advanced" tendencies which find expression in legislation, there is



rarely any challenge to the interests of their class so sharp as to drive them from grumbling to action. In a country which has conscription, the risk of an anti-democratic *coup d'état* is negligible and I can recall no instance of it. The military revolutions which succeeded in Turkey, in Portugal, and to a limited extent in Greece, when M. Venizelos was first summoned from Crete to guide the work of reform, were all of them in their origins professedly democratic and anti-dynastic movements, and they succeeded only because an advanced group of officers was able to enlist the sympathy of the men. There are other cases (the Boulanger adventure, for example), in which a reactionary movement led by generals, who came near to testing their power, must obviously have failed, because the men on the whole felt with the mass of the civilian nation. In the first revolutions in Russia and Germany, which stopped short with the overthrow of the monarchy, the decisive factor in both cases was that the conscript soldiers or sailors garrisoned in the capital or within easy reach of it broke away from their officers and actively supported the Republican movement. In times of peace it was usually, though not always, the case that the conscripts of the "active" army would fire on riotous strikers at an order from their officers. They were, however, very young men easily intimidated and influenced: experience seems to show that during war, when the bulk of the army is composed of reservists of maturer

years, there are limits beyond which discipline does not avail.

It is not, I think, a rash assumption, that in our day, given the hold of Socialism upon the working class in most Continental countries, the officer class could not use the mass of their conscript men to upset a Republican Government or to destroy a Socialist or semi-Socialist or Radical Ministry in the interests of an anti-democratic reaction. Even if the Guards, or some other part of the active army of young conscripts, were to be misled or coerced or bribed into supporting a reactionary *coup d'état*, there would still be behind the democratic movement the mass of the trained reservists in civil life, who might be called up on the popular side, if a nucleus of organization were left intact to conduct a civil war. On the whole, universal military service seems to a limited extent a safeguard for democracy, or at least for its outer forms. That, of course, has always been the opinion of Continental Socialists, who have always wished to retain compulsory service, though with a very brief period of training and with many reforms in the system of discipline and command such as Jaurès has sketched in *L'Armée Nouvelle*.

In the Germany of to-day one may study, though in somewhat bewildering complexity, conditions which strip society to the foundation, and reveal at its base this factor of physical force, which we in England habitually ignore in our

thinking, because it is more comfortable to ignore it. The structure of power is so unstable in its poise that one hardly knows which of many shocks to its balance is the most likely to upset it. Perhaps a fatalist would be right who reckoned that so many forces tugging in various directions may, after all, and in the end neutralize each other. In the first place one has to consider the professional interests of this mercenary army. It is composed of young men to whom high pay and plenty of good food were an attraction; they must have belonged to the minority which in all countries really enjoys continual fighting, is not revolted by brutality, and has no sentimental objection whatever to shooting working men. A high proportion of them are ex-officers, or students, and the rest seemed to be young boys, mostly from the country. What will happen, when this force of about 450,000 is reduced, in accordance with the Treaty, first to 200,000 and then (by next March) to 100,000 men? Will they allow themselves to be disbanded, or will they be content to exact subsidies and similar compensations? Again their discipline will be tested severely when the Allies present for surrender their list of commanders by land and sea, some of them probably popular and successful leaders to whom every mess-table looks up. Will the Free Corps assist in arresting and guarding these accused commanders and in handing them over to be tried by enemy courts-martial? Will they even sit quiet while this unpopular operation is carried

out by the civil police? To any one who has watched the failure of the authorities to punish those convicted of atrocities in suppressing Spartacus that will seem questionable. Again, if the Government, partly from necessity and partly from electioneering motives, proceeds to measures which the propertied class will regard as "the end of all things"—a drastic levy on capital, the nationalization of certain industries and the subdivision of the Junker estates—will the officers of the Corps remain passive if the Conservative leaders should think that the time is ripe to attempt a reactionary *coup* in defense of property? These Corps cannot have the mentality of a conscript army. The officers may number one in twenty-five of the whole force (that is a provision of the Treaty), and the ranks are largely composed of middle-class men. The tension of interests is so terrific in Germany to-day, and the difficulty of paying both debts and indemnities will be so great, that no Government can avoid onslaughts on property which will be leveling in their effect. They will be doubly unpopular because they are imposed by foreign Powers, and will benefit foreign Powers. The temptation to resist will be strong, and if the propertied class should appeal successfully to the Pretorian Guard, there is no internal force which could resist it in open warfare. At the best it might perhaps be wearied out in a long guerrilla struggle, for its numbers on the 100,000 basis (if the Allies really



insist upon that) are not adequate to maintain order over a territory so large as Germany.

If it came to a struggle, however, we are thrown on the other horn of the dilemma of force. There is, thanks to the Treaty, no regular reserve of force, no militia or civic guard, to which a democratic Government could appeal if the professional army rose against it. The opposition would come in the form of mass risings, guerrilla attacks, and above all strikes, from the revolutionary forces. The struggle would necessarily end in the victory of one of the extremes. Long before it were decided, however, the Entente would presumably intervene, either by a forward march from the Rhine or by the re-imposition of the blockade. No pedantry of any dilatory legal procedure laid down in the League of Nations Covenant would be likely to stand in the way. The Council of the League can drive a "coach and four" through that Covenant any day, by the simple expedient of refusing to "recognize" the German Government, whether reactionary or revolutionary, against which it proposed to intervene. Thus we are confronted with another aspect of the haunting problem of force. Any revolutionary movement in Germany or Austria which comes to power, even if it is in a sense a defensive movement acting against a lawless militarism, will have to satisfy the workers by creating a Soviet form of government. I happen to know, on first-hand authority, that an official warning was given this spring by



the British to the Austrian Government, that while socialistic legislation would be tolerated, the adoption of a Soviet Constitution would be the signal for instant intervention.

It seems to me that in this attempt to impose a middle course on the German States, while at the same time forbidding them to build security upon a citizen militia, we expose them defenseless to the two extremes. There is force available for a reactionary policy, the force of the long-term professional army, with its reactionary officer caste. There is also force, at least potential force, available in the form of the turbulent revolutionary strike, which may be used to render the control of the Pretorian Guard over the seat and organs of government precarious and useless. One hundred thousand mercenaries may terrorize Berlin and some of the federal capitals, but they can hardly at the same time control the entire railway system, the mines, and the scattered industrial regions. The difficulty might have been evaded if in the first days of the Revolution the Ebert-Scheidemann Government had done what Doctors Renner and Bauer so cleverly did in Vienna. The Austrians made a militia from reliable Socialist material, and it has stood by them loyally through all the trials of the blockade. Whether it can be converted into a long-service professional army in accordance with the Treaty is, however, very doubtful. The German Government was confronted with an appallingly difficult

problem. It had to combat a violent Spartacist movement, subsidized with Russian money, fairly well supplied with arms, and able to command the services of some trained bodies of revolutionary troops, especially the men from the fleet. Only a very skilful Government could have dealt with this reckless armed revolt without creating a counter-revolutionary force, which is certain sooner or later to embarrass it, if not overthrow it. It is easy to blame Scheidemann and Noske for calling in the new militarism of the mercenary fighting caste, but it was Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg (for all the honor that we pay their martyred memory) who first appealed to force, and sharpened the class war into an armed conflict.

Every social doctrine has its own appropriate solution of the problem of force. It is natural for capitalism to create a professional army. It is natural for Communism to rely on the proletarian Red Guard. What we in England do not sufficiently realize is that any process of evolutionary Socialism, which means to retain the typical democratic Parliamentary forms, will be insecure in its advance unless it has in reserve a militia which includes the whole body of citizens, or to be more precise, the men. We are apt to say that we need no force: we shall advance only as we have the opinion of the majority with us. But what shall we do if our opponents appeal to force? Sooner or later there will come a moment when a propertied minority, if its privileges are

sufficiently threatened, will appeal to force against us and will not scruple itself to defy Parliamentary forms. What then shall we do if it has behind it a docile professional force armed with all the modern engines of aircraft, tanks, and gas? How much would constitutional right avail us, massed though we might be in our majorities, against a squadron of aeroplanes manned by officers and flying low, with their machine guns and their bombs?

In nothing has the League of Nations as it exists to-day shown itself so consciously a capitalist creation as in its decision to make the long-term mercenary army the custodian of the force that survives in the world. We are no nearer to the end of militarism. What has happened is that the older militarism, which was on the whole nationalist in its scope and aim, is being transformed into a new institution which rests definitely upon class. We are returning to the age of "chivalry" when arms were the monopoly of the caste.

## XI

### A COMMENT ON THE PEACE

THE Treaty of Versailles is a monument on which is written in legible characters the epitaph of the Liberal age in Europe. That age had spent its vitality long before the war broke over us. We had all prepared the struggle, Allies and enemies alike, by a generation of Imperialism. Amid the emotional exaltation of the conflict, it seemed for a moment that the liberal mind, evolving an elaborate and constructive ideology to justify to itself the moral and physical horrors of the hatred, the slaughter, and the starvation, was preparing for a supreme effort to realize itself. In Mr. Wilson's speeches it found a lofty and eloquent expression. The event has proved that the realistic tendencies that guided us in the pre-war period, and laid in the Secret Treaties the foundations of this peace, were stronger than this improvised idealism, which had served its end by keeping the peoples in their ranks until victory was won. The personal frailties of statesmen are no adequate explanation of a moral catastrophe so complete. It is the mind of the ruling class in the Allied nations which has written itself into this peace, and

made of the Treaty itself an accurate mirror of capitalist Imperialism.

The European settlement reflects that old-world "policy of alliances" which M. Clemenceau proclaimed, with perfect frankness, as the antithesis to the League of Nations. It is true that the motive of the French scheme of reconstruction is a passion for safety, and a dread of the formidable and prolific German race. The dread is intelligible, when one calls to mind a vision of the devastated area of the Somme. France has sought safety, however, in a triple panoply of precautions, which have made her for the moment the armed mistress of Europe. She secures herself, first of all, by reducing the German army to a police force of 100,000 men, without reserves, staff, or heavy armaments. She retains, at the same time, her own conscript army, unfettered, unlimited, and in numbers, as in gallantry and skill, immeasurably the most redoubtable armed force upon the Continent. Even when it stands alone it is, relatively to other Continental forces, immensely more preponderant than was the German military machine at the height of its power. Secondly, France has sought reinsurance in a Treaty of Alliance which makes Britain and America her partners in the defense of her Eastern Frontier. Mr. Wilson has forgotten his principle, that "there can be no league or alliance or special covenants or understanding within the general and common family of the League of Nations."



In so doing, he has created an armed group within the League, which will inevitably form the habit of acting jointly in the daily intercourse of States against its other members, while by giving to France this especial guarantee against aggression he has weakened the force of the general pledge which should protect all its loyal associates. Defensive indeed this Treaty is: so were all the alliances that ranged the peoples in readiness for this war. It will work psychologically as alliances have always worked. It will give to France an assurance of absolute safety in every contingency that may arise, and so absolve her from the necessity of observing prudence and moderation in the exercise of her military ascendancy.

With unflinching concentration and no little skill France has contrived to arrange the territorial settlement of Europe to fit her general design. The German race has been subjected not merely to disarmament, but to a partial process of dismemberment, which may not yet be complete. The military occupation of the Left Bank of the Rhine is limited, indeed, to fifteen years, but the resources of intrigue and intimidation are already at work to foster the creation there of a semi-independent buffer State. In the Saar coalfield the French State will be for half a generation the sole employer, and with the unlimited right to introduce foreign immigrant workmen, it may modify the mind and composition of the present population, before the moment for a plebiscite arrives.

Austria-Hungary has been "Balkanized," but in the creation of this network of little States, too small, too landlocked, too little homogeneous to be capable of a real independence, France has pursued a definite military plan. Poland, Tchecho-Slovakia, Roumania, and the enlarged Serbian Kingdom become her military satellites. All of them have been aggrandized in defiance of nationality at the expense of Germans (or in the case of the two latter), of Magyars or Bulgarians, and thus a double end has been served. The military strength of the dreaded race is reduced, and at the same time the little State, endowed with a perennial source of conflict with the main body of the German race, is obliged to lean for protection upon France. A small State ceases to be independent when it has wronged a neighbor: it must thereafter subordinate itself to a protector. Poland, as the suzerain of Danzig, and the sovereign of from two to three million German subjects, shutting off East Prussia from the German Fatherland by her "corridor," and holding the land routes by which Germany will seek to trade with Russia, seems committed to a perpetual feud. The Tchechs have been assisted to create a dwarf Empire, composed of Germans, Slovaks, and Ukrainians. The inclusion in it of the 3½ million Germans of Bohemia and Moravia is a peculiarly wanton violation of nationality, because they live mainly in a compact racial fringe along the borders, and could with ease have been detached, to

join their race-fellows of the Austrian and the German Republics. Finally, German-Austria, reduced to a little Alpine area which cannot possibly be self-supporting, is forbidden to exercise its free choice and may not seek a new career by union with federal Germany. Vienna, the overgrown head of this puny body, will dwindle by death or emigration to half its present size. The French settlement, in short, has created a German *irredenta*, which will number at least twelve millions of the discontented. To sustain this arrangement these satellite States are linked up by unnatural military frontiers, and in all of them French military missions are forming the conscript armies destined to support the military hegemony of France.

That Mr. Lloyd George acquiesced, no doubt with some reluctance, in this French scheme of settlement, is no accident. Our ruling class had its own aims to pursue, and if it assented to French ascendancy on the Continent, it did so consciously or half-consciously, in order the better to secure its own economic ambitions elsewhere. The main result of the Treaty, apart from these territorial and military dispositions in Europe, is to enhance our naval supremacy, to enlarge our overseas Empire, and to secure our control of the world's markets, raw materials, and transport. Our most formidable commercial competitor is ruined.

The simplest but not perhaps the most impor-

tant of the gains which British Imperialism obtains are its accessions of territory. One need not pause to argue that the "mandate" is as thin a disguise of annexation as the old protectorate. In effect, we have added to our Empire most of the German colonies in Africa and in the Pacific, the undeveloped wealth of Mesopotamia, and the strategically important regions of Palestine and possibly of Persia, while in Egypt our possession is finally secured. In all these lands we acquire immense potential resources in raw materials.

With the exception of some small coasting vessels, the mercantile tonnage of Germany passes into our possession. It is true that it may not fully compensate us for our own losses in the U-boat war. It comes near, however (save for American competition), to conferring upon us a monopoly of the world's carrying trade. The mere cessation of her profits as a carrier is the least part of Germany's loss or of our gain. We acquire with her shipping the possibility of fixing the world's rates, and controlling the world's commerce. Our only formidable European competitor at sea has been eliminated. Our shipping rings may choose their policy. They may elect either to boycott German goods and German ports, or else to secure for themselves a profit by carrying for her at rates which they can fix.

The conventional treaty of history began with an appeal to Almighty God, and then declared

the resolve of the contracting parties to live in "peace and amity." This Treaty omits that profession of goodwill. The old-world model then proceeded to revive (at least as a provisional arrangement) the various treaties of commerce which had linked the belligerents before the outbreak of war. There is no such clause in this Treaty. What treaties omit is often as important as what they include. The salient fact about this Treaty is that, from first to last, it restores none of the rights of reciprocity which habitually govern the relations of civilized States. In clause after clause Germany renounces her former rights: in no clause does she recover any of those rights which in the modern world are indispensable for the conduct of trade. Elaborate provisions insure the right of Allied subjects to trade with Germany, to reside in Germany, to pass their goods through her customs under the "most-favored-nation" clause without suffering discrimination, to fly over her territory, to use her rivers, to enjoy on her railways the same rates and facilities as her own subjects; nay, even to require her to build new railways for the better transmission of their goods. These are all one-sided privileges, and far from securing equal rights in return from them, the German trader secures no rights at all. Such rights as he may in practice enjoy will depend solely on the grace and goodwill of each of the Allies. Their tariffs may totally exclude his goods, or differentiate against them.



Their railway and shipping rates may penalize his exports. Their legislation may exclude his business firms and his commercial travelers from their markets, and deny him the right to reside on their territories. Against any or all of these discriminations he is powerless, for he cannot retaliate in kind. We used to talk of the economic "war after the war": there can be none, for the Allies will levy their measures against an enemy deprived of the rights of defense. In this condition, but little removed from outlawry, Germany will remain, until she is admitted to the League of Nations, and even then it is doubtful whether her status will be one of equality, for the Covenant of the League prescribes "equitable" but not "equal" treatment for the commerce of its members in each other's markets. Some privileges, the usual privileges of all Europeans, Germany is never likely to regain—the "extra-territorial" rights, for example, under which alone trade is possible in Egypt, Morocco, and Turkey. Her rivers, but no others, are placed under international control.

At the moment, German traders have been expelled from China, Africa, Turkey, and all the Allied territories. Their businesses, factories, warehouses, and banks are all confiscated and broken up. This Treaty confers no right to begin, however slowly, the toil of building up again that immense fabric of world-trade by which alone her population can live. Even if we omit all reckon-

ing of the still uncounted, but probably excessive, indemnity (some indemnity by way of reparation is manifestly just), this denial of reciprocity in trading and residential rights is itself sufficient to ruin our competitor. Even if we assume that it will be modified, within two or three years, the period is sufficient to enable us in the interval to assure (with some American competition) our own monopoly of world-trade, especially in the great markets of China, Turkey, and Africa to which Germany will have no access. Our victory means that we control the world's markets, its shipping, its raw materials, and its banking. It may be that we shall dole out raw materials, though with a grudging hand, and allow the door of some of the markets we command to stand ajar. We must do this, for otherwise no indemnity could be earned, and our starving enemy would inevitably lapse into Bolshevism. We shall not pursue an unqualified policy of exclusion, but in every transaction we are in a position to levy a triple tribute on German trade. We shall take one profit on the raw materials that our brokers are permitted to sell to her, and another on the goods that we carry for her, and a third on the goods which our bankers and middlemen may consent to handle for her, in overseas markets. The vanquished must submit to be exploited by the victors, glad if their fate is not to be wholly boycotted.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Exploit" is a slippery word. In this contest it means that while the services rendered by our shippers, bankers, and

While this Peace creates for France an artificial military ascendancy on the Continent of Europe, it confirms and enhances our naval supremacy. The surrender of the German Fleet and the limitation of Germany's future building leave intact in the world no navy, save that of the United States, which could oppose us in any use which we might please to make of our power at sea. We have successfully resisted any proposals (if they were seriously made) to limit the naval armaments of the victors, or to restrict the range of naval power, by defining the Freedom of the Seas. The idea of the League of Nations had given a new meaning to that term. It ought now to mean that the terrific instrument of the blockade shall be reserved as a method of coercion which the League alone, acting under its Constitution, may apply, and then only for the common good, against a disturber of its peace. It is still open to us in middlemen will be real services, it is by the use of force that the enemy is obliged to have recourse to them. Lest it be said that this economic strangulation is a moral discipline, necessary to secure reparation for Germany's victims, let me point out that it is not her victims who will profit by it. This triple tribute will go, not to Belgium nor to France, nor even to our own Exchequer; it will go into the private pockets of British and American financiers and merchants. So far from promoting the payment of an indemnity by Germany, it will diminish the earnings by foreign trade out of which Germany must meet her liabilities. The official excuse for laming the industrial efficiency of Germany seems to be that we must do so in order to prevent German industries from competition with those of the devastated areas. But we allow British and American industry to compete with Belgian and French industry.

certain cases, in spite of its covenant, to use the blockade in our private quarrels, without the sanction of the League's Court or Council.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lloyd George has said that a fleet cannot be used as an engine of aggression. It can be used to starve an opponent into surrender, to close his factories, condemn his workers to unemployment, subject his children to the miseries of diseases, of malnutrition, lower the vitality of a whole generation, menace his State with disorder and revolution, and in the end to impose a settlement of violence. If any delusion survives, that the blockade, because it is bloodless, is a painless or humane method of coercion, we have learnt little from this war. It is in some sense a more cruel method than war, because it strikes, above all, at the poor, and among the poor chiefly at the children, the aged, and the women. An army may carry out a total devastation of a limited area, as the German army did in Northern France; our blockade, justifiable, no doubt, up to the date of the armistice, but no longer, effected a partial devastation of the entire area from the Rhine to the Urals. The cities stand intact and the fields are still green, but every human being who survives it has suffered a physical and moral deterioration, and

<sup>1</sup> We must, of course, submit to the prescribed delay and submit our dispute to the Council, but unless it *unanimously* finds us in the wrong, we may thereafter do as we please. Since most of the Council consists of our Allies, it is never likely to pronounce unanimously against us.

the toll of the dead civilians who stand to its account must be reckoned far above a million. From actual war the knowledge that we ourselves must suffer casualties and loss is a deterrent, but a people with a supreme navy may embark lightly on a blockade. We could fasten the doors of Europe if we kept our armies at home, without loss of life to ourselves, and at the end of the process dictate a victor's terms. While we retain the physical means of exercising this coercion and decline to bind ourselves to use it only at the bidding and in the service of the whole of civilization, the shadow of force still darkens the life of humanity, and the world is not yet built upon law. Force works even when it is not actually applied. In every dispute or negotiation, our arguments derive from this power that we have retained in our own unfettered hands a cogency which may have no relation to justice.

On to this old-world settlement the Liberalism of Mr. Wilson has grafted, as a pathetic survival of his defeated idealism, the institution of the League of Nations. So far from redeeming his failure, it may in fact aggravate, because it must stereotype it. The most iniquitous arrangements of the Peace have acquired the sanctity of seeming right, and all civilization is pledged to defend them and maintain them. The League, founded without Germany or Russia, is, before all else, an alliance of the victors to insure their conquests. One single provision in its covenant stamps it as



a deliberately conservative creation. No decision of any importance can be taken and no valid award can be rendered without the unanimity of its Council, and that Council is nothing but a league of the allied Governments of the victorious Great Powers, diluted only by the presence of certain of their more dependent satellites.<sup>1</sup> The single voice of France could by this arrangement defeat any proposal to permit the union of Austria with Germany or to revise the settlement by which the Poles and the Tchecho-Slovaks have acquired millions of unwilling German subjects. There can be under this provision for unanimity no modification of the military ascendancy of France or of the naval supremacy of Great Britain. The League, moreover, makes no real attempt to impose economic peace, and nothing in its covenant strikes at preferential and differential trading (outside the areas under "mandates"), or promises the just apportionment of the world's raw materials. The Constitution of the League contains no rudiment of democratic or Parliamentary government, nor does it set up, even for the purpose of the impartial settlement of disputes, any Council of Conciliation independent of the masters of the greater armies and navies of the world. Like the old Holy Alliance, this tremendous concentration of force will be used by the

<sup>1</sup> Among the nine members of the Council, Spain is the only neutral.

satisfied Powers to maintain the existing order, to prevent salutary change, and to repress any people which seeks to amend its condition by revolution.<sup>1</sup>

The age which this Treaty ushers in will be, even more than the generation which preceded it, an age of Imperialism, in which the ruling classes of the victors will increase their power, through the control of monopolized raw materials. First by the blockade and then by the economic servitude imposed upon Central Europe it has prepared the forces which will challenge it, and may one day replace it. The social struggle between capital and the workers will slowly, and with varying success, assert itself across the surviving racial antagonisms. The outlook is dark. It will lighten only when labor begins to understand how the subtle and subconscious working of economic motive has bent patriotism to its ends, turned our idealisms and our righteous angers into its servants, and made by this greedy settlement the prospect perhaps of great riches for the few, but also of new wrongs, new wars, new oppressions.

<sup>1</sup> By the simple expedient of refusing "official recognition" to any new Government which they disliked (e.g. to any purely Socialist Government) the Great Powers who dominate the League may deprive any nation, even if it were a member of the League, of its rights under the Covenant and make of it an outlaw liable to be coerced or blockaded without appeal or redress.









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